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STUDIES IN INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

SARAT CHANDRA ROY

Edited

with an

Introduction

by

NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

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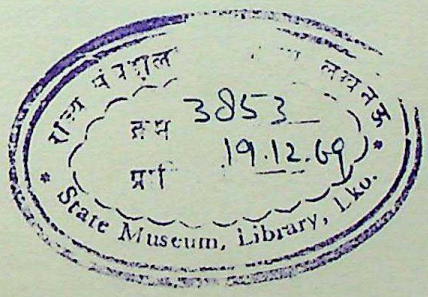

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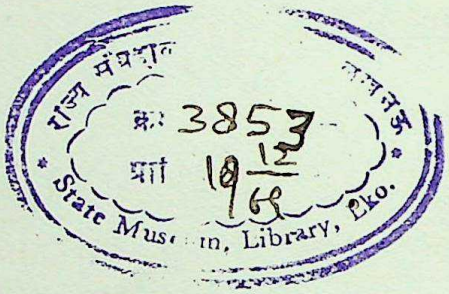

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Introduction

Sarat Chandra Roy [*born* 4th November, 1871 ; *died* 30th April, 1942] was one of the pioneers of anthropological studies in India. He was the first to deliver a course of lectures on anthropology in any Indian University,[1] and also one of the first to publish a quarterly journal, named *Man in India*, devoted exclusively to anthropological and related archaeological studies in India (1921). Sarat Chandra Roy was also connected with the Bihar and Orissa Research Society ever since its inception in Patna. The *Journal* of that Society was enriched by a large number of articles from his pen, while its museum owes him a heavy debt for the presentation of the major part of his own ethnographic and archaeological collection.

Roy's first book on the *Mundas and their Country* was published in 1912 ; this being followed by his monographs on *The Oraons of Chotanagpur* (1915), *The Birhors* (1925), *Oraon Religion and Customs* (1928), *The Hill Bhuiyas of Orissa* (1935) and *The Kharias* (1937).

Besides these, he wrote copiously on a variety of topics like caste, Hindu religious ideas, migration of different racial groups and cultures in India, and so on. But it is not the volume alone of his writings which is impressive, although that in itself would have done credit to any scholar of reputation. Far above that was the nature of his encyclopaedic scholarship, and the depth which he reached in his analytical appraisal of the religion and philosophy of either the tribal communities whom he describes, or of the Hindu social system by which they were, either consciously or unconsciously, affected.

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1. S. C. Roy, *Principles and Methods of Physical Anthropology.* Patna, 1920.

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Roy was a deeply religious person, in the sense that he looked upon the highest values of a civilization as its central substance, and he also tried to appreciate the worth of a civilization, whether tribal or advanced, by trying to identify himself in spirit with that central core of ideas. This gave him an advantage which is often denied to those scientists who are concerned more with the formal, tangible aspects of human culture. But this idealistic approach had also its own disadvantages.

Even when it gave a meaning to some of the happenings in the history of communities, it sometimes blocked the way to an appreciation of other forces which may also regulate human life to an appreciable extent. In Indian anthropology, Roy was a pioneer ; and in his days, anthropology as a science had not reached the degree of precision or objectivity which it has attained in later times. But that is a limitation under which a pioneer has always to work.

It is extremely reassuring, however, to note that Roy was never orthodox in his approach. In some of his studies of Oraons revivalist movements, he has clearly indicated that although the revolt of the Oraon revivalists or reformers took a predominantly religious or cultural form, yet the inspiration arose from their reaction to distressing economic circumstances which pressed upon them from all sides. Indeed, it was this sympathy and understanding of the sorrows of tribal communities which had turned him from the profession of Law to that of an anthropologist. For he saw clearly that without a deep insight into the workings of a people's culture and thought-system we were more likely to do them harm than good.

In the last years of his life, Roy realised one thing more. In his earlier studies during the first quarter of the twentieth century, he had undoubtedly broken new ground by enlisting the services of History in an appreciation of a people's culture—a point of view to which the followers of the Functional School of Anthropology turned long afterwards. But Roy realised that he had perhaps done something which was not quite justified. In describing the culture of a tribe

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like the Oraon, for instance, he had on the whole under-rated (though not overlooked) territorial or regional differentiations, and tried to present a composite picture of 'Oraon culture', which did not actually apply to any particular section of the tribe which lived as 'a cummunity', and was separately identifiable either in space or in time.

To this extent, he paid a homage to the Functional School by his confession to the present writer a few months before he passed away that if he were given the chance of living his life over again, he would disregard all the ethnographic accounts which he had written in the past. Instead, he could bury himself in a single village of a small region, and study in microscopic detail how the life of the community was built up, as well as its culture. This desire to engage in a new adventure of intensive, microscopic study was proof of his superb intellectual resilience.

But one can hardly ignore the possibility of a microscopic study also leading one astray. A cytologist undoubtedly succeeds in adding copiouly to our knowledge ; but cytology cannot wholly disregard the findings of anatomy or morphology. Just as Roy may have overstepped in his earlier writings in the direction of what is popularly known as Idealism, so the Functionalist can also bring about his own undoing by an excessive concern for what happens within the 'cell' itself. Roy was saved from idolatry by the encyclopaedic sweep of his intellect, and was able to appreciate both points of view even when he was destined no longer to put his new appreciation of modern anthropology into action. But the story of his life should help us in avoiding idolatry at the other end, when we are likely to mislead ourselves by the belief that a study of human society's cell-structure will offer us all the magical key necessary for an understanding of human civilization.

Roy's life and works thus hold a great lesson for us even today. And it is, therefore, that I welcome the present endeavour of the devoted band of

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scholars responsible for the publication of *Indian Studies : Past & Present.* They have republished a few of Sarat Chandra Roy's essays and addresses delivered on different occasions. These cover a wide range of subjects which are both of theoretical and of practical interest. Scholars who read these essays will find many new vistas opening up before them if they do so with an openness and reverence which they eminently deserve. One need not agree with every view expressed, for that is something which Roy himself would never have expected. As he changed, he would expect others to change also. And it is in this intellectual stimulation, when we keep an open mind, that we can pay the best homage to one who acted as a pioneer and a doyen in the field of Indian anthropology.

Calcutta *Nirmal Kumar Bose*

23. 7. 66

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STUDIES IN INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Sarat Chandra Roy

Papers Selected and Edited
by
Nirmal Kumar Bose

N. 1

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Anthropological Section of the Sixth Oriental Congress, Patna, 1930.

I must begin by thanking the Executive Committee of the Oriental Conference for the honour they have done me by inviting me to preside over the meetings of its Anthropological Section.

Presidential Addresses to such Conferences and Congresses generally take either of two forms. They either review the progress of research in the particular branch of study in question during the interval since the Conference last met or since such a review was last made, or they take the form of a discourse on some special department of the science in which the speaker is particularly interested or some special line of research the importance or usefulness of which the speaker desires to emphasize.

As the progress of anthropological research in India is still in its infancy, the story of its progress since the Conference was started ten years ago cannot possibly take more than a small fraction of the hour or so which is considered appropriate for a Presidential Address. I accordingly propose, with your permission, to avail myself, to some extent, of both the alternative courses usually adopted on such an occasion. I shall begin with an enumeration of the anthropological work done in India during the last decade, of which no connected account appears to have been yet given, and then proceed to make some observations on one or two particular lines of anthropological study which every one of us may usefully pursue.

Ten years ago, in February 1921, just after this Conference was inaugurated, in my Presidential Address to the Anthropological Section of the Indian Science Congress held at Calcutta, I made a survey of the anthropological work till then done in India.[1] That survey disclosed, in the first place, the sad neglect in the past of anthropological research by Indian scholars, although India afforded a most favourable field for such work. I had to lament, in the second place, the regrettable omission by most of our Indian Universities to include Anthropology in their curricula of studies, and the neglect by the State in India to afford suitable encouragement to the study of Anthropology among our young men by providing special post-graduate scholarships in Anthropology in Indian Universities and by recognizing efficiency in Anthropology as a special qualification for suitable judicial and administrative appointments. For, one can never over-emphasize the value of a scientific knowledge of human nature and human social behaviour to the judge and the administrator as much as to the social and religious reformer and the man of business and the statesman. And, last but not least, I could not help lamenting the sad apathy of the millionaires and multi-millionaires of our country to emulate their fellows in Europe and America in their generous patronage to advance anthropological research by founding chairs in Anthropology in our Universities, making endowments for anthropo-

1. see *Man in India*, Vol. I, pp. 11 ff.

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logical research scholarships for study abroad, and fitting out or subsidizing anthropological expeditions.

In the decade that has since passed by, there is just a little—but, alas ! much too little—improvement to record in respect of the interest evinced by our students and our Universities in anthropological research. Although the University of Calcutta is still the only University where Anthropology, both Physical and Social or Cultural, is recognized and taught as an independent subject for Degree examinations, the Universities of Bombay, Madras, and Lucknow have now included a knowledge of Social Anthropology as part of their degree courses in Sociology, History, and Economics, respectively. The other Universities of India, so far as I am aware, have not yet recognized the claims of Anthropology, either Physical or Cultural, to a place in their curricula.

As for our landed aristocracy, and commercial and professional magnates, they are still as apathetic as ever to the claims of anthropological study and research to their patronage. And although it must be gratefully acknowledged that it is to Government initiative and to Government patronage that we owe much of the scanty anthropological work so far done in this country, adequate encouragement by the State to the study of Anthropology among the young alumni of our Universities is yet to come.

In these circumstances, the output of anthropological literature by Indian scholars is still unfortunately meagre.

Leaving out of account the few ethnological publications of the Government of Burma, India proper cannot show to its credit more than about some thirty works on anthropological subject published within the last ten years. And out of this scanty number more than one-third have been prepared by European writers and about a half have been published by Government or under Government auspices. Thus, as many as six valuable ethnographic monographs have been issued under the auspices of the Assam Government, all written by English officials, except one which is from the pen of an American scholar. These are :—*The Sema Nagas* and *The Angami Nagas*, by Dr. J. H. Hutton, both published in 1921 ; *The Ao Naga Tribe* by Dr. W. C. Smith, published in 1925, *The Lohta Nagas* published in 1922 and another book on the *Ao Nagas* in 1926. both by Mr. J. P. Mills, and *Notes on Thado Kukis*, published in 1929, by Mr. William Shaw. To the Bombay Government we owe the *Castes and Tribes of Bombay* by Mr. R. E. Enthoven, published in 1920-22. A small book on *Stone Age in India* by Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar was published by the Madras Government in 1926. The Mysore Government published in 1928 and 1929 two volumes on *Mysore Tribes and Castes* compiled by the late Mr. Nanjundayya and completed and edited by Rao Bahadur Anantha Krishna Iyer. The Bihar and Orissa Government is publishing an exhaustive *Encyclopædia of the Mundas* in several volumes, entitled *Encyclopædia Mundarica*, compiled by the late Rev. J. Hoffman which is being printed in parts. A similar work on the Santals by Rev. Dr. P. O. Bodding is in active preparation, and its first volume was published at Oslow last year and a second volume is about to be published. The Cochin Administration published, in 1928, an interesting volume on *The Syrian Christians* from the pen of Rao

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Bahadur Anantha Krishna Iyer. Another State publication is *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions* in three volumes by Syed Siraj-ul Hassan, published in 1920. The Calcutta University published in 1928 a short discursive account in 84 pages of the *Aborigines of the Highlands of Central India* by Mr. B. C. Majumdar, and another short cursory account of *The Hos of Seraikela* by Dr. A. N. Chatterjee and Mr. T. C. Das in 1921. The same University published in 1927 a more substantial book on *Prehistoric India* (of which an earlier edition had appeared in 1923) by Prof. Panchanan Mitra. The latest comprehensive and reliable account of *Prehistoric India* was published in 1929 by Prof. V. Rangacharya of the Presidency College, Madras. A good little book on *Cultural Anthropology* was published in the same year by Mr. Nirmal Kumar Bose of the Calcutta University. A short popular account of the *Ao Nagas* was published in 1925 by Dr. S. K. Majumdar. To the Rev. P. O. Bodding we owe two more excellent books, one entitled *Materials for a Santali Grammar*, published at Dumka in this Province in 1922, and another entitled *A Chapter on Santal Folk-lore*, published at Christiana in 1924 by the Royal Frederik University of Norway. Indian contributions to folk-lore literature during the decade are two small books by Shovana Devi, entitled *Indian Nature Myths*, and *Indian Fables and Folk-lore* both published in 1926, a book of *Folktales of Orissa* by Upendra Narayan Datta-Gupta, published in 1923, and another small book on *Indian Folk-tales*, in two parts, by Godavaris Misra (1926). Prof. Rai Bahadur A. C. Mukherji of Allahabad has just brought out a revised edition of his *Hindu Fasts and Feasts* under the new title of *Ancient Indian Fasts and Feasts*. An important contribution to the study of Indian Ethnology and Culture is Dr. Gilbert Slater's *Dravidian Element in Indian Culture*, published in 1924. A series of articles contributed by Prof. A. P. Banerjee-Sastri in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* were reprinted in 1926 under the title *Asura India*. Finally, I am responsible for two ethnographic monographs, one on the *Birhors*, published in 1925, and another on *Oraon Religion and Customs*, published in 1928. An English translation of Prof. J. J. Myer's German work on *Sexual Life in India* has been just published in two volumes by the Broadway Oriental Library of London. This is about all new anthropological book-literature on India, published in the decade just closing. And I am afraid we cannot regard this meagre output as quite satisfactory.

Turning next to periodical literature, it is a little cheering to find that contributions by Indian writers on anthropological subjects show a perceptible increase. Up to the year 1920, the only Indian Journal devoted to Anthropology was the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* started in 1915. Since 1921 another quarterly journal under the name of *Man in India*, published in this Province, has been added. Five periodicals, namely, the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, the *Journal of the Mythic Society of Bangalore*, the *Journal of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and the *Indian Antiquary*, which up till 1920 used to include, in their pages, articles on anthropology among other subjects, still continue to do so. The Management of the Anthropological Section of the *Indian Antiquary* is, however, no longer conducted in India, but in England, where under the ægis of the Royal Anthro-

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pological Institute, and with the formation of an Indian Research Committee in 1924, the anthropological section of that Journal is expected to be strengthened and improved. And in October last, *Man*, the monthly organ of the Royal Anthropological Institute, published a Special India Number, which, it is to be hoped, will in future form a permanent feature of that periodical.

A few new journals published in India, such as the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, the *Journal of the Andhra Historical Society*, *the Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, and the *Viswa Bharati*, now occasionally publish articles of anthropological interest, and so also do a few popular journals, both English and Vernacular, such as the *Modern Review*, *Prabāshi*, and *Prakriti*. I shall not tire your patience by giving an account of these and other anthropological articles on India which must be familiar to most of you, and systematic references to which will be found in successive issues of the Journal entitled *Man in India*.

When we think of the rich harvest of anthropological material waiting to be gathered all over India and, here and there, decaying unseen and uncared for, we can by no means regard with complaisance the camparatively meagre additions made to our store of anthropological knowledge during the decade under review. There is, however, one notable incident to be mentioned which bids fair to revolutionize the accepted ideas of cultural and racial origins in India. I refer to the epoch-making discovery, first made by our late lamented countrymen Rakhal Das Banerjee, of the existence of wonderful remains of hoary antiquity in the Indus valley.

We have good cause to rejoice over the exploration of those remains on the plains of the Indus so enthusiastically conducted during the decade by the Archæological Department of the Government of India, as they throw quite an unexpected and new light on India's prehistoric and ancient past. These startling discoveries of remains of prehistoric and ancient Indian culture dating back to neolithic, chalcolithic and copper ages and coming down to the rise of the Maurya power in the third century B. C. hold out promises of a rich harvest of materials for re-writing the cultural and racial history of India, and possibly of some other countries as well. It will no doubt take several decades to make a thorough expolaration of the several ancient mounds on the Indus valley, but the wonderful remains hitherto unearthed have already made Mahenjo-daro and Harappa places of pilgrimage for all earnest students of Indian prehistory and ancient culture. And some of you must naturally envy Sir John Marshall and his fortunate Assistants their rare opportunities for exploration and study in this fascinating field.

Such rare opportunities can, however, come only to a very few in any generation. Nor are opportunities for first-hand study of primitive tribes in their jungle homes available to many of us.

But although it is not given to most of us to work either in the rich sites of long-forgotten cultures of our pre-historic past or even among the living early cultures of primitive jungle tribes of the present day, we all of us have at our own doors equally good

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substitutes. We have within easy reach of every one of us fields for anthropological study, no less fertile and fascinating, though much less pretentious and imposing.

Wherever he may happen to live or move about in India, and whatever may be his occupation or rank in life, the earnest student can seldom lack opportunities for observing, recording and studying certain classes of facts and phenomena of great anthropological interest,—for such facts and phenomena are found wherever human society exists.

I refer to the traditional customs, rites and beliefs, including stories and myths embodying such beliefs, to which the generic name of 'folk-lore' was first applied in 1846 by W. J. Thomas. Such customs, rites and beliefs may belong either to individuals among a people, or to families, clans or other groups among them, or to inhabitants of particular localities, and they stand on a lower intellectual level than, and are often inconsistent with, the orthodox or officially recognized customs, rites and beliefs of the people among whom they occur. The use of the term 'folk-lore' is, as you are aware, no longer restricted to survivals of traditional customs, rites and beliefs of a past age lingering among the backward classes in civilized nations, but is now also extended to folk-arts and crafts and other new manifestations of the folk-lore spirit both among civilized and uncivilized peoples.

This study of the folk-mind, as it expresses itself in folk-customs, folk-rites, folk-beliefs, folk-tales and folk-arts and crafts, is not a mere idle pastime with students of folk-lore. It is pursued primarily for the light which folk-lore throws on the early intellectual evolution of human societies or what may be appropriately called the prehistory of the human mind. If exploration of prehistoric sites yields human fossils that elucidate the evolution of the human body, the study of folk-lore yields what Sir James Frazer has called 'fossils of the mind' which 'illustrate an early stage in the progress of thought from its low beginnings to heights yet unknown.'

As prehistoric Archæology, though primarily a branch of Anthropology, is now taking rank as a science by itself, so too is folk-lore. And in some western countries, learned societies have been formed to foster and advance the study of this new science. I cannot express the aim and scope of the new science of folk-lore better than in the eloquent words of two former Presidents of the Folk-lore Society of London. And I hope you will bear with me if the quotations appear rather long.

Mr. A. R. Wright in his Presidential Address to the Folk-lore Society in 1926 said, "Folk-lore is at the base of all other sciences, and appears in all of them at their early and unsophisticated stages, and for its elucidation it must draw upon the history of all of them. Our Society must not only seek to construct in this way a living picture of the folk life of the past, but it should bequeath to posterity as perfect a picture as it can achieve of the folk life and mental attitude of the present. Our science, though it be one of the newest, ought to be one of the most attractive, and, were its scope and purpose clearly understood, ought to draw into the ranks of the Society enthusiastic workers not by single spies but by whole battalions". Another former President of the Folk-lore Society

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Andrew Lang, speaking of the aim and scope of folk-lore "which to many seems trivial, to many seems dull", said :—

"Only a few people seem interested in that spectacle, so full of surprises—the development of all human institutions, from fairy tales to democracy. In beholding it we learn that we owe all things, hunanly speaking, to the people and to genius. The natural people, the folk, has supplied us, in its unconscious way, with the stuff of all our poetry, law, ritual; and genius has selected from the mass, has turned customs into codes, nursery tales into romance, myth into science, ballad into epic, magic mummery into gorgeous ritual..... The student of this lore can look back and see the long-trodden way behind him, the winding tracks through marsh and forest and over burning sands. He sees the caves, the camps, the villages, the towns, where the race has tarried, for shorter times or longer, strange places many of them, and strangely haunted, dwellings and inhospitable. But the scarce visible tracks converge at last on the beaten ways, the ways to that city whither mankind is wandering".

So said Andrew Lang. It is for masters of the science, like Andrew Lang and Sir James Frazer, to collate and compare the folk-lore literature of different peoples of the world and trace out those winding tracks that converge on the road that leads to the goal. We humbler students can only collect such folk-lore material of our own country as is within easy reach, and thus try, in the words of Mr. Wright, 'to serve, each in our little way, as good travelling companions and helpers to those who would trace out the winding road'.

You will all, I hope, agree with me that we Indian students are in a most advantageous position to advance our science by the collection and study of folk-lore before much of such lore is lost and forgotten. Though a good deal has already decayed or disappeared, yet even now folk-lore materials meet us in abundance at every step of our journey in life. Folk-rites yet form a not negligible element in the ceremonies attending a Hindu's birth and childhood, puberty and marriage, disease and death. We light upon folk-customs and folk-rites, folk-beliefs and folk-art in our own homes, in our neighbours' houses, in the lanes and the streets, and in the market-place. Our female folk, particularly those of the older generation in all grades of society, not to speak of men and women of the more backward and unenlightened classes of our population, may be said to live in an atmosphere of folk-lore from the cradle to the grave. Nor are the better classes and educated men of our country altogether free from traditional folk-observances and folk-practices. Thus, we are following folk-custom when on rising in the morning we are careful to avoid seeing the face or uttering the name of a miserly person or a particularly unlucky person or a childless person, or when in the morning if we see anyone rubbing only one eye we ask him to rub both eyes, or when we avoid seeing our faces in a broken mirror, or eating salt left in another's plate, or shaving on the day of the week on which we were born, or jumping over a sleeping person or attending a call of nature with our faces to the sun, or with wooden shoes on, or while starting on a journey, we avoid eating plantains, or meeting a barber or washerman or a oilman (*kalu*), or when

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in the evening we happen to look at the sky and find that only one star has appeared we do not take away our eyes until we see another, or, as in some places, three more stars.

I shall not multiply instances, for they would be unending, and many instances of omens, good as well as bad, will readily occur to your minds. And yet, omens, as you know, form but an infinitesimally small fraction of the wealth of our Indian folk-lore. Everyone of us daily comes across instances not only of traditional beliefs in omens and dreams, and various other classes of traditional beliefs, customs and practices which the advanced section of the community now despise as superstitions, but also of folk-sayings, folk-tales, folk-songs and ballads, and other arts and crafts of the folk that have been either handed down by tradition or have developed and are developing among the backward sections of our people under the influence of folk-ways of thinking and feeling, and which, though not actually despised, are regarded with amused toleration for their quaintness, or patronized for affording entertaining diversion. Neglected in this way, much of our interesting folk-lore, as I said, is getting lost or degraded or attenuated or is being transformed through transference to new sets of objects or through amalgamation with other practices or beliefs.

What is now essential for the development of our science is, in the first place, to secure as accurate records as possible of such folk-lore materials as are still available. A systematic and classified collection and careful recording of different classes of existing folk-lore material, district by district, *taluk* by *taluk*, and *thana* area by *thana* area, or *pargana* area by *pargana* area, as is being done for the county areas in England, and for other local areas in other parts of Europe and in America, is the first and most imperative task that awaits students of Indian folk-lore.

The next task to which we have got to apply ourselves is to trace the life-history of each item of folk-rite, folk-custom and folk-belief and then to make a careful analysis of each item of folk-lore into its component elements. An investigation into the life-history of an item of folk-lore embedded in civilization will reveal how it has in the course of its history been altered, attenuated, or transformed, or transferred to new objects, or amalgamated with other customs, and we shall thus be able to restore to some extent the original form of an ancient legend, rite, custom or belief and visualize it in its original setting and correctly understand its nature and position. A careful analysis will reveal that not only are different groups of the folk-lore of a people referrable to different levels of culture but that even the same folk-custom, folk-tale, myth or legend may be composed of inconsistent elements which can only be explained as survivals from different stages of intellectual development. A few of them may represent a very crude and primitive stage of thought ; others may represent a comparatively higher level of thought and culture ; and some may betoken a still further advance in culture, though yet below the general level of the culture of the higher classes of the people in question.

At the risk of being tedious, I shall, by way of illustration, refer to the folk-

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rites in the marriage customs of the higher castes of Bengali Hindus. The first thing that strikes the student is that side by side with the religious rites and ceremonies of an advanced type enjoined by the Hindu *Śāstras* and conducted by the family priests of the bride and bridegroom, there is another class of parallel rites enjoined by tradition and conducted by married ladies. The *Śāstric* rites include prayers, offerings and oblations to the gods and ancestor-spirits, and vows solemnly pronounced by the bridegroom himself and by the bride's father or other guardian who gives away the bride in the presence of the assembled friends, relatives and men of the community, besides certain symbolic rites such as joining the hands of the couple, walking seven paces and circumambulating the sacred *Homa* fire with the ends of their upper garments knotted together,—and so forth. If the *Śāstric* ceremonies are considered essential for the validity of the marriage, the female folk-rites are regarded, at least by the older generation of our ladies, as essential for the future well-being of the wedded couple. To avoid exceeding the usual time limit and tiring your patience, I must resist the temptation of inflicting upon you a full account of these female folk-rites of a Bengali Hindu marriage, but shall content myself with merely giving you the main features of those rites as observed among some higher caste Hindus in the districts of Khulna and the 24 Parganas in Bengal.

These female folk-rites of a Bengali Hindu marriage consist of over a dozen different ceremonies of which I shall enumerate the principal ones without describing them in detail. They are the following :—

(1) *Gātra-haridrā* or ceremonially anointing the bride and the bridegroom with turmeric paste at their respective houses on an auspicious day shortly before the day of marriage, the process of anointing being repeated every day till the day of wedding. (This corresponds to some extent to the *Ubtan* or *aptan* ceremony of Bihāri Hindus, though the Bihāri custom of *māṭkor* or digging earth from *kūr-khet* or *kumāri-kṣetra* is unknown in Bengal.)

(2) *Adhibās* or inauguration ceremony consisting of invocation of divine blessings or rather the attraction of 'luck' through contact with the good '*mana*' and kindly offices of well-dressed married ladies beloved of their husbands, and through ceremonial contact with such auspicious objects as rice (both husked and unhusked), tender grass shoots (*dūrvā*), sandal-wood, vermilion, myrobalan, curds, honey, *ghee* (clarified butter), flowers, white mustard, etc.

(3) *Jal-sādhā* or *Jal-sāwā*, consisting of the ceremonial drawing of water by married women who are happy in their married life, for the benedictory bathing of the marrying couple and for certain other ceremonial uses at the wedding.

(4) *Dadhi-maṅgal*, in which at early dawn of the wedding day, a portion of the rice left over out of the rice used for the *ābhyūdayik śrāddha* or oblations to ancestor-spirits and cooked by a woman whose husband is alive, is mixed with curds (*dahi*), sweets etc. and is eaten by the bridegroom at his own house and the bride at her parents' house. In some communities parched rice (*ciḍā*) instead of *bhāt* is used for the purpose and five married women eat it with the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be. After this the

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women go with an iron knife and a new earthen vessel to a tank and 'cut the water', as it is called, that is to say, draw a rectangle over the surface of the water with the knife and dip their earthen vessel three times, face upwards, into the rectangular area thus marked out, and fill it with water. This water is used as what is called *'sohāg-jal'* or 'Love-water'. In the afternoon, after the *ābhyūdayik śrāddha* or offering of oblations to the manes of deceased ancestors by the bride's father or other male relatives, the bride wears a red-bordered *sāḍi*-cloth and sits down in a room with a grain-measure (*kūnkey*) or small cane-cup in hand and, from the vessel of *'sohāg'*-water placed before her, she goes on filling the cup with water and pouring the water back into the vessel and repeating the process again and again, and each time that she does so she mutters by turns a wish to be blessed with the affections of her husband and her husband's parents and brothers and sisters, respectively, thus :—*'Sohāg ! Sohāg ! Svāmīr sohāg !'* (Love Love ! May I have my husband's Love !) ; *'Sohāg ! Sohāg ! Śāsuḍīr* (mother-in-law's) *sohāg !'* ; *'Sohāg ! Sohāg ! Śvasurer* (father-in-law's) *sohāg !'* ; *Sohāg ! Sohāg ! Nanader* (husband's sister's) *sohāg !' Sohāg ! Sohāg ! Devarer* (husband's younger brother's) *sohāg !'*, and so on by turns for the affections of each member of her future husband's family. With this *sohāg-jal* the family barber washes the feet of the bridegroom before the wedding ceremonies begin.

(5) *Bhār nāmāno* and *Hāi-āmlā bāṭā*.—In the forenoon of the wedding day, the bridegroom in his own house and the bride at her father's, are each seated on a painted wooden seat (*piñḍi*) and three married ladies sit down in front of the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be, and two other married ladies cover up with a cloth the heads of the four ladies thus seated. Thus seated and covered over with a cloth, one of the three ladies pounds some *āmlā* or myrobalan fruit, and each of the three ladies mixes a little spittle from her mouth with the pounded myrobalan. The myrobalan paste thus magnetized with the spittle of ladies beloved of their husbands is placed upon a tray or a flat bamboo-basket on which are arranged various kinds of grains and certain other auspicious or *'mana'*-possessing articles. The cloth is then taken off their heads, and the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be, stands up and a raw cotton thread dyed in turmeric is placed loosely round his or her head and is moved by three ladies downward from the head to the feet three times ; each time the other two ladies ask them, 'What are you doing ?' and they reply, 'We are taking down the burden (*bhār*) of so-and-so' (naming the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be). This turmeric-dyed thread is then tied round the left wrist of the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be, with some tender grass-shoots (*dūrvā*) attached to it.

(6) *Jātrā* or ceremonies at starting to fetch the bride when the bridegroom is provided with an iron (but now, in some cases, silver) knife or nut-cracker, and on being asked by his mother, 'Where are you going ?' answers, 'I am going to fetch a handmaid for you'.

(7) *Strī-ācār* proper, of which the main feature is the *Baran* or ceremonial circumambulation of the bridegroom at the bride's house by the bride's mother and a number of

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married women, one carrying the *varan ḍālā* or a flat bamboo basket containing various auspicious or '*mana*'-possessing articles, one an ornamented phallic symbol called *Ākh*, made of rice-flour fashioned in the shape of a cone and ornamented with red and yellow colours, another carrying a pot of benedictory water with the figure of a deity drawn upon the outer surface of the pot, a fourth carrying a pot of water charmed with love-incantations, a fifth an earthen pot with a lighted lamp inside, a sixth carrying on a brass-plate an ornamented symbol of the goddess of Fortune (Lakṣmī) called *Siri* or *śrī*, a seventh carrying the tray containing a variety of grains besides the *hāi-āmlā* mentioned above and a few other ladies carrying other auspicious ingredients, and the mother-in-law carrying a flat bamboo basket containing twenty-one lighted wicks placed over twenty-one shells of the *dhūtūrā* fruit (Datura).

(8) *Sāt-pāk* or ceremonially carrying the bride round the bridegroom seven times.

(9) *Sindūr-dān* or ceremonial anointment of bride and bridegroom with vermilion.

(10) *Āngṭhi-hārāno* or concealing the bridal ring of bride and bridegroom by turns inside the mud formed by water soaking in a small shallow hole made at the spot where the bridegroom and bride have just had their ceremonial bath on the morning after the actual marriage ceremony, and each attempting to find out the other's ring.

(11) *Kanakāñjali* or the ceremonial handing over of some paddy by the bride to her mother by way of leaving her parent's 'luck' behind her and going to try her own luck in her husband's house.[1]

When we attempt to classify the female folk-rites of a Bengali Hindu marriage, we find that some are obviously meant to symbolize and cement the marriage-tie, some appear to be intended, on the principle of sympathetic magic, to make the union happy, prosperous and fruitful ; some appear to have been intended to ward off supernatural evil influences and ill 'luck' from the wedded couple, some are of the nature of love-charms, and some and the most important appear to be of a religious nature. We further find that not only have different groups of these folk-customs different origins but they likwise belong to different levels of culture. Thus, an undoubted instance of survival of or borrowing from savage culture is the folk-custom, still found in some Bengali Hindu communities, of soaking a rag in the bride's urine and, when dried up, making it into a thick wick which is saturated with mustard oil and lighted in a large earthen cup fed with mustard seeds and waved in front of the bridegroom's palanquin or car on his arrival at the gate of the bride's place for the wedding. This savage custom, now fallen into disuse in most places, would appear to have originated with a double object, namely, that of scaring away evil spirits and also that of operating as a love-charm. On a somewhat higher level of culture stands the female folk-rite called '*Sohāg-jhāḍā*' which is still in vogue in some Bengali Hindu communities.

This curious custom is as follows :—Five well-dressed women whose husbands are

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1. For an account of these rites of a Munda marriage, vide *The Mundas and their Country*, pp. 444—454.

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living and who are particularly happy in their married life wear each at the posteriors a thick cloth below the waist over their *sāḍī*-cloth and each by turns sits down three times on a new busket filled to the brim with sun-dried paddy or unhusked rice and marked on its outer side with two symbolical human figures painted with vermilion diluted in *ghee* or clarified butter. Each time while sitting down on the basket of paddy, the lady says,—

'*Sohāg ! Sohāg ! Svāmīr sohāg jheḍey dilām*', i.e.

Love ! I communicate a husband's love (through this paddy)'.

The five ladies then thrash the paddy, and besmear it with turmeric ; and the rice thus magnetized with the 'good luck' of wives well-beloved of their husbands, is the only rice used in the marriage ritual.

The religious or quasi-religious folk-rites of *strī-ācār* will be found to stand on a much higher level of culture than the rest and to have a different origin.

The original purpose of most of these folk-rites and ceremonies of a Bengali Hindu marriage is, however, no longer known to the ladies who practise them, and all that they can say is that they observe them because their forbears did so before them and that any any omission to do so may bring ill-luck to the married couple.

Many of these folk-rites which appear to be anomalous and irrational when found in advanced communities and are no longer intelligible to their civilized performers, become intelligible only when we view them side by side with analogous rites and ceremonies of more primitive communities for whom they have sufficient meaning and purpose, as they are in perfect accord with their manners and ideas.

It is through such comparative study alone that we can see the primitive basis of such practices and their underlying beliefs. Thus, when we see the relatives of a Mūṇḍā or Orāon bride with the avowed object of scaring away evil spirits and the 'evil eye', flourishing swords round the screen within which the vermilion-anointing (*sindūr-dān*) ceremony of a marriage is taking place, we come to understand the original purpose of the Bengali custom which requires a bridegroom to carry in his hands a knife or a nut-cracker which is obviously the present-day substitute for a sword. Similarly, when we see two elderly Mūṇḍā women, one carrying an unsheathed sword and another a bow and arrow, accompanying four maidens who draw water in pitchers for use in the marriage rites, and passing the weapons over their shoulders so as to touch the pitchers and thereby protect the water from the evil attentions of wicked spirits or the evil eye, we come to appreciate the original object behind the Bengali-folk-custom of 'cutting with a *dā*' or vegetable-cutter the water which is drawn from a tank at dawn on the wedding day for use as *sohāg-jal*. When we see the bridegroom and bride in a Mūṇḍā marriage touching each other's neck with a bit of rag tinged respectively with his or her own blood, and probably by way of symbolic repetition of the same rite of exchange of blood, smear each other on the forehead with *sindūr* or red-lead, we perhaps see the significance of the *sindūr-dān* rite which forms an essential feature of the female folk-rites of a Bengali Hindu wedding, though it does not appear to form any part of the *Śāstric* ritual. The only application of blood to the forehead of the bridegroom in the female folk-rites of a Bengali

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Hindu marriage now survives in the custom in some Bengali communities which requires an elder sister of the Bengali bride to prick her own little finger with a thorn of the *bael* (*Aegle marmalos*) tree and mark the forehead of the bridegroom with the blood thus drawn. The curious explanation now given for this practice is that in case the bride tells the bridegroom that she is afraid of going to his house lest his sisters harm her through their witchcraft, the bridegroom will point to the blood-mark on her forehead and tell her that she need have no fears as he has killed his sisters and marked his forehead with their blood. This may be either an instance of degradation or attenuation of an ancient custom or its transformation by transference to a new set of objects, or it may be an instance of borrowing on the part of Bengali Hindus of a savage custom from the ruder indigenes of their country. The original primitive custom of mixing together the blood of bride and bridegroom still survives in the *Nāh-choḍ* ceremony of a Bihāri Hindu marriage, which consists of drawing a little blood from the fingers of bride and bridegroom and mixing them together.

The similarities noticed above between some of the ruder folk-rites of Bengali Hindu marriage and the analogous rites of a Mūṇḍā marriage, do not necessarily point to their Mūṇḍā origin. True, the existence of ruder elements in the culture of a civilized people points to the existence of a ruder race or races who originated them. But these rude originators of such customs might very well have been their own forefathers at a former and ruder stage of their culture rather than some other race, whether indigenous or not, with whom they came in intimate contact in the past. In fact, with regard to some of these folk-rites of a Bengali Hindu marriage, it may not appear improbable that they were the older and perhaps almost the only marriage rites of the non-Aryan elements in the Bengali Hindu population before the *Śāstric* rites came to be superimposed upon them, relegating these older rites to the custody of the more conservative female-folk. Thus we find that in a civilized community, as I said, different customs and beliefs may survive at different stages of arrested development, some having been arrested in their development while they were pure savage customs or beliefs, some when they were at a somewhat higher level than savagery or at what is called the barbaric level, some when they formed part of the national custom or belief but came to be cast off as useless by the more advanced classes and retained only by the women-folk or other conservative and non-progressive sections of a civilized nation or preserved only in particular localities.

All Indian folk-custom and folk-lore do not, however, represent survivals of primitive custom and ritual whose natural development has been arrested. There are some Indian folk-rites, folk-customs and folk-stories which appear to have been originally devised by higher civilisation to bring higher ideals of religion and morality and social relations home to the minds of the more backward classes of their population.

If a certain class of folk-rites and folk-customs connected with a Hindu marriage and their underlying ideas can be explained and understood by a reference to similar customs among our aboriginal tribes and other backward communities, there is another group of such folk-rites whose true significance can only be appreciated by a reference to

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the highly advanced religious rites and customs enjoined by the Hindu *Śāstras*. In fact, some of our *strī-ācār* rites, like the *Vrata* ceremonies of Hindu ladies, may be appropriately called the popular and simplified editions of corresponding *Śāstric* rites and ceremonies. They are meant to express, emphasize and enhance the Hindu's belief in the spiritual nature and function of marriage. Thus the ceremonies referred to above as *adhibās* or ceremonial inauguration of the bridegroom and bride, *jal-sādhā* or ceremonial drawing of water for the auspicious wedding-rites, *varan* or ceremonial welcome to the bridegroom with benedictory gestures and joyous ululation or sounds of *ūlū-ūlū*, the waving of lamps and other auspicious objects, and the *pradakṣiṇa* or ceremonial circumambulation by married ladies round the bridegroom, which form prominent features of the *strī-ācār* ceremonies of Hindu marriage, are all only simplified forms of the distinctly religious ceremonies of the *adhibās*, *ghaṭ-ānayan*, *ārati* and *pradakṣin*, observed in the worship of the greater Hindu deities. The crowns made of coloured pith and tinsel (the *ṭopar* of the bridegroom, and the *moḍ* or *mour* of the bride) represent the *mukuṭs* or crowns worn by the images of the higher Hindu gods and goddesses. The object of such female-rites in a Hindu marriage is obviously to sacralize and sanctify the marriage tie, in the eyes of the unenlightened female-folk and other backward classes, and to elevate it, in their estimation, from a mere biological and socio-economical relationship to a holy religious sacrament. The wedded couple are honoured even as deities, thus emphasizing the spiritual essence of man and the spiritual function of all human relationships. Such *strī-ācār* ceremonies would indeed appear to have been originally designed to serve as a system of suitable object-teaching or 'kindergarten', so to say, by which to impress upon the female folk and the backward Hindu or Hinduized communities to whom the *Śāstric* rites and Sanskrit *mantras* or formulæ are unintelligible jargon, the sacredness and spiritual ideal of the marriage-relationship, as conceived by Hindu sages. In this way with the aid of these simple but impressive folk-rites suited to their understanding and ways of thought, the marriage ritual is charged with a new and deeper meaning for the unenlightened and unprogressive sections of the community.

This class of folk-rites would appear to be among the special contributions of Aryan Hindu culture to the cultural development of the Indian masses. These *strī-ācār* rites like the *Vrata* ceremonies and *Vrata-Kathās* of Hindu females constitute or, at any rate, once constituted a powerful civilizing force. They are the outcome of an effective popular system of religious and moral education wisely devised by the religious teachers and social leaders of ancient Hindusthān, who were missionaries not of any cult but of culture—particularly spiritual culture. And one is tempted to imagine some enlightened ladies of ancient India, if not devising, at least helping in the growth of this class of *strī-ācār* rites. It is probably with reference to these *ācāras* or customs that it is laid down in Hindu religious books that *ācāra* or customary rites, *mantras* or religious formulæ and invocations, and *Prīti* or love are the three essential requisites of a complete or approved (*siddha*) Hindu marriage. It is greatly to be deplored that this class of *strī-ācārs* came to be amalgamated with folk-customs of lower order and lower origins and in time to share the

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fate of other folk-customs, namely, attenuation, retardation of natural development, and even degradation.

As may be expected, this class of Bengali folk-rites have their analogues in the folk-rites of the Hindus of Bihar, Orissa and some other parts of India, thus indicating their common Aryan Hindu origin. Such of the *str-īācār* rites as are common to different parts of India may be reasonably assumed to have originated from the same common source.

True, we find that almost identical rites form the essential features of the marriage ceremony of some of our aboriginal tribes, or, in fact, almost the whole of their marriage ceremony. Thus, we find the counterpart of the *gātra-haridrā* ceremony of a Bengali Hindu marriage in the *sasāng-goso* (lit., turmeric-anointing) ceremony of the Mūṇḍās, the counterpart of the *Adhibās* ceremony of a Bengali marriage in the *Cho* (Hindi *Chumān*) ceremony of the Mūṇḍās, in which the couple are touched with such 'luck'-bringing objects as rice, grass blades, bread, etc., the counterpart of the Bengali's '*bhār-nāmāno*' ceremony in the '*Sutāmtol*' ceremony of the Mūṇḍās, the counterpart of the Bengali's *Jātrā* ceremony in a part of the Mūṇḍā's *ūlisākhi* ceremony in which the Mūṇḍā bridegroom on being asked by his mother where he is going, replies, 'I am going to bring one who will take care of you and give you rice and vegetables', the counterpart of the *varan* ceremony of a Bengali marriage in the *Dā-hirchi* and *Chumān* ceremonies of Mūṇḍā marriage, the counterpart of the *Sātpāk* ceremony of a Bengali marriage, in the *Chāuli-heper* ceremony of the Mūṇḍās as a part of which the Mūṇḍā bride is carried on a bamboo basket three times round the bridegroom, the counterpart of the *sindūr-dān* ceremony of Bengali Hindu women in the *sindūri-rākāb* ceremony of the Mūṇḍās ; the counterpart of the *Āngṭhi-hārāno* ceremony of a Bengali Hindu marriage in the Mūṇḍā custom of *Dūl-dā* in which after the *sindūri-rākāb* and *Dā-āu* rites, while they are being ceremonially bathed, the Mūṇḍā bride and bridegroom each conceals, for the other to find out, a tiny earthen jug in the mud formed by the water in which they have been ceremonially bathed ; and the *Kanakāñjali* ceremony of handing over of paddy by the Bengali bride to her mother by way of leaving her parents' *Lakshmī* or 'luck' with them, while taking leave of them, has its counterpart in the Mūṇḍā marriage rite of *Bābā-heretukām* in which the bride while leaving her parents' house throws, without looking back, three handfuls of paddy behind her, over her own head, on to her mother's *sāḍi*-cloth, a portion of which she holds out to receive the paddy.

Again, the Mūṇḍās, like the Bihāri Hindus, set up a *Māṇḍoā* or mud-pulpit for the ceremony of *sasāng-goso* or anointing with vermilion ; the *Chumān* ceremony of a Mūṇḍā marriage has a closer resemblance to the Bihāri ceremony of the same name than to its Bengali counterpart known as *strī-ācār*. The *ūli-sākhi* ceremony of a Mūṇḍā marriage which has no analogue in Bengali marriage ceremonial is evidently a copy of the *Imli-ghoṇṭāi* ceremony of a Bihāri Hindu marriage. The Mūṇḍā custom of seating the bride and bridegroom on a plough yoke covered over with straw has its parallel not in any Bengali custom but in the Bihāri custom of burying under the *māṇḍoā* or marriage-booth

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a plough-yoke with some bamboo twigs. The Mūṇḍās, it may be noted, appear to have, in the course of their ancient migrations, come in contact with Hindus both of Bengal and of Bihar, and have for ages been living in close contact with Hinduized aboriginal and semi-aboriginal tribes and depressed classes who have derived part of their present social rites and customs and religious worship from the Hindus of Bengal or Bihar or Orissa.

A consideration of the language, manners and customs of the Mūṇḍā-speaking tribes would lead to the inference that they had no distinctive marriage ritual in the past, and that much, if not all, of their present-day marriage ceremonial has been borrowed from neighbouring peoples of a higher culture, probably, the Hindus of Bengal and Bihar, not perhaps directly but probably through some neighbouring Hinduized tribes or 'depressed' Hindu castes who had already adopted them from Bengali or Bihāri Hindus. Though the Mūṇḍā has a word 'āṛṇḍi' meaning 'marriage', he generally uses the expression *do-kiā*, or 'kept' to signify 'married'. This would seem to indicate that 'keeping'—or, in other words, simply 'living together as man and wife',—would, among the Mūṇḍās, amount to marriage, though not at the present day, at any rate in the not distant past. Even at the present day, only the mere act of forcibly smearing vermilion on the forehead of a Mūṇḍā woman by a man is taken to constitute marriage with her ; and if the woman so dealt with refuses to live with the man who has smeared vermilion on her forehead, but desires to take another husband, she can only be married as a widow in the *sānghā* or *sāgāi* form.

Whereas the female folk-rites of a Bengali Hindu marriage constitute in themselves a complete system of marriage ceremonial, the present-day marriage ceremonies of the Mūṇḍās is a hybrid system composed of certain rites which appear to have been adopted directly or indirectly from Bengali Hindus as also other rites probably borrowed directly or indirectly from Bihāri Hindus. The female folk-customs of neighbouring Hindu castes appear to have in course of time infiltrated into the folk-customs of several of our aboriginal tribes and thus served to some extent as a civilizing agency for them as well.

Finally, in order to arrive at a positive conclusion as to the origin of any item of folk-lore, the student will require to make a further analysis and distributional study of such folk-lore item by plotting it out on a map and determining its focal centre and tracing its diffusion to marginal areas. Such investigation will show that though independent invention or parallel evolution of one and the same cultural trait sometimes occur in different centres and among different peoples, diffusion from a single source is a more common process in culture history. The discontinuous distribution on the map of a particular cultural trait may suggest independent origin at different centres, although some cases of apparent similarity may, on closer examination, be found to be merely accidental and not cases of identity. Again, what began as a wave of diffusion is sometimes found in the course of its progress to break up into local modifications which continue to develop each on its own line, and these parallel lines may again be found to converge, or they may

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variously combine with other cultural elements and thus constitute new culture complexes. Where several unrelated elements thus enter into combination to form a culture complex which is found in widely distant and unconnected regions, the common origin of such a culture complex or culture compound may be reasonably accepted. The greater the number of elements thus associated together in a single culure complex, the more probable becomes the inference of their common origin.

From what I have said it will be seen that the task of the folk-lorist in tracing the origins of different folk-customs and beliefs of a people, and in searching the causes of similarities in the folk-customs of different peoples, is indeed not a very easy one. Either community of race, or racial intermixture may, of course, account for certain similarities in the folk-culture of different peoples. Some cases of similarity or identity of custom may be due to cultural diffusion or cultural contact. Some may not unreasonably be referred to the similar working of the human mind in the same stage of intellectual development to meet the same needs. And some may be the peculiar heritage of a particular people, introduced by their religious and social leaders to educate the more backward sections of their population. It is when we come to the large class of incongruous and inconsistent folk-customs and beliefs surviving from different stages of culture and found among one and the same people that the difficulty in tracing folk-lore origins becomes much more serious.

A race of immigrants into a new region may adopt some items or elements from the folk-culture of the ruder indigenous population, and the indigenes may also in turn borrow from the incomers elements of their comparatively more advanced folk-culture, and modify or degrade them in the process. And this dual element necessarily produces inconsistent elements in folk-lore.

In some cases, again, there may have been more than one ethnic wave of immigration into a region originally populated by a savage race. And this would naturally lead to greater complexites in the folk-lore of both the incoming and the indigenous populations, and make the task of the folk-lorist still more difficult. Again, some earlier race or races may have disappeared, leaving some of their customs and beliefs as a legacy to their successors.

Thus the task of tracing what has been called 'the genealogy of folk-lore' or the ethnic elements in folk-customs and folk-beliefs, is a very arduous and perplexing one, albeit intensely interesting. And the student of folk-lore must not only acquire a full knowledge of the present culture and mentality and the past history of the people whose folk-lore he particularly studies, but he must also equip himself with an adequate knowledge of the life and culture of their neighbouring peoples and others with whom they may have come in cultural contact in the past. It is obvious therefore that the folk-lorist in his search for connections and causes will need all available assistance from every possible source, from comparative ethnology and social psychology, history and philology as well as from literary and other sources.

Those of us who cannot spare the time or energy to devote themselves to the study

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of the origins of folk-lore by the laborious process of analysis, classification and comparison, may, at any rate, help forward the progress of the since by the careful collection of such folk-lore data as are easily accessible to them.

Time will not permit me to speak of other fruitful fields for anthropological study which lie within easy reach of every earnest student of the science. I shall only just indicate one more fascinating subject for such study to which any Indian student may apply himself, at least in the intervals of other business.

In every part of this vast continent, in every province, every district, every pargana and every taluk, every town, and almost every village, there are communities or families of what are now termed 'depressed classes'. These altogether number some sixty million souls in India.

To these classes belong in this Province of Bihar and Orissa, the Doms (154,320),[1] the Hāḍis (98,084), the Methars (7,724), the Pelās Hālālkhors (18,586), the Tūris (43,360), the Bāuris (15,826), the Mochis (1,123), the Chāmārs (31,661), the Ghāsis (8,216), the Ghūsūriās (1,972), the Gokhās (44,873), the Kāndrās (148,671), the Kebās (6,103), the Pāns (199,519), the Siyāls (1,030), the Gāndās (87,717), the Musāhars (603,911), the Dhobis (91,612) and few other smaller communities ;

in BENGAL the Bāgdis [1,015,738], the Bāuris [303,614], the Bhūinmālis [91,973], the Chāmārs [136,533] and their kinsmen the Mūchis [455,236], the Doms [173,991] and their kinsmen the Hāḍis [173,706], the Dosādhs [45,863], the Kāorās [112,281], the Namasudras [1,908,728], the Pods [536,568], the Tiyārs [215,270], the Dhobās [228,052], and a few others ;

in the UNITED PROVINCES, the Chāmārs [6,076,081], the Domārs [7,764], the Bānsphoḍs [7,292], the Bhāngis [397,861], the Khāṭik [181,873], the Bājgis [5,818], the Dhanuks [129,280], the Sunkārs [9,406], the Bālāhars [1,988], the Bābeliyās [34,211], the Saiqualgārs [1,250], the Koiris [859,882], the Rājes [2,827], the Rangrezes [34,012], the Dhobis [623,049], besides a few small communities such as the Rangsāz, the Tamoli, and the Gharāmi, *etc.* ;

in the CENTRAL PROVINCES, the Chāmārs [901,549], the Methars [29,916], the Pānkās [214,894], the Ghāsias [43,142], the Māngs [83,576], the Mehrās [1,65,177], the Basers [52,947], the Bālāhis [52,314], the Gāndās [157,787], the Kātias [41,311], the Koḍis [39,628], the Dhobis [165,427], the Kūmhārs [118,520], and a few others ;

in the BOMBAY PRESIDENCY, the Chāmārs or Chāmbars or Mochis [211,853], the Bhāngis [91,856], the Māhārs, the Holiyās or Dheḍs [1,081,716], the Māngs or Mādigs [227,697], the Dhors [10,916], the Khalās [6,507], the Shindhavas [4,265], the Tūris [711], and the Kolghās [375], and a few others ;

in the MADRAS PRESIDENCY, the Hāḍḍis [23,124], the Bāvuris [57,400], the Oṛiyā Bāndāsis [41,768], the Medāres [21,158], the Pārāiyāns or Panchamas [2,337,036], the Holeyās [91,558], the Valluvāns [59,163] the Mādigās [737,427], the Chākkiliyāns

1. All the census figures given in this paper are of the Census of 1921.

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[549,807], the Mālās [1,493,129], the Pallāns [862,685], the Korāgās [5,287], the Cherumas [248,397], the Pānos [80,824], the Nāyādis [417], and some others ;

in the PUNJAB, the Chāmārs [854,530], the Chuhḍās or Sweepers [785,284], the Moches [40,313], the Ods [28,611], the Ghāsis [2,800], the Ramdāsiās [167,623], the Mazhbis [19,878], the Marchees [1,273], the Mahtams [68,396], the Dhobis [138,885], and a few others ; and

in ASSAM, the Namasudras [166,564], the Pāṭnis [45,154], the Jogis [161,441], the Dhobās [33,466], besides a number of other castes all together estimated to number over twenty-seven lakhs.

These various depressed classes,—some of whom would appear to be the remnants of the earliest inhabitants of the land long since absorbed into Hinduism and relegated to the lowest position in the caste hierarchy, some sections of whom now live as village serfs and menials in Aryan villages as well as purely aboriginal villages, and some appear to be of mixed aboriginal and non-aboriginal descent and others appear to be of heterogeneous origin,—these present a most interesting and fruitful field for anthropological and sociological study. Time will not permit me to enter into a discussion of the ethnology or sociology of any of these interesting communities, some of whom are now putting forward claims to Aryan ancestry. I shall only observe that a few of our depressed communities with no social organization worth the name present certain features even more primitive than those of some of our aboriginal tribes, whereas a larger number of these communities present cultural features of diverse varieties and grades which form interesting connecting links between the customs and beliefs of our various aboriginal tribes at one end of the cultural scale and those of the higher Hindu castes, at the other.

With these backward communities of different grades and varieties of culture at our very doors and with vast stores of folk-lore within doors, so to say, the Indian anthropologist stands in a most favourable position for the study and advancement of his science. In fact, few countries, if any, in the world can provide such rich and varied materials for the study *in situ* of the different stages in the slow and laborious development of human thought and culture from the lowest depth of savagery to a very high, if not the highest, stratum of civilization so far reached by mankind. And no Indian student of Anthropology can reasonably complain of lack of opportunities for advancing the science through suitable study and research. If he lacks the means and opportunities for exploring ancient sites and investigating the prehistory of Indian Man by digging up human fossils and implements and artefacts of the Stone and Copper ages, he cannot surely lack opportunities for unravelling the prehistory of Indian thought and culture as revealed in folk-lore. If he lacks opportunities for pursuing field work in Anthropology among our primitive jungle tribes, he can surely find no less interesting subject for anthropological investigation among our 'depressed classes' of different grades of culture, some of whom may be his own next-door neighbours.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES IN INDIA

Atthough Anthropology is the scientific study of mankind, both severally in their different social and racial groups and integrally as an interrelated whole, and the study of higher culture is as important for scientific as well as practical purposes as the study of the so-called lower culture, I shall in the present paper deal particularly with the value of anthropological studies in stimulating and helping welfare work among our aboriginal population and the depressed and suppressed classes, and generally in the service of humanity.

It is a matter for regret that, although the scientific value of anthropological research is now generally recognized in scientific circles, its practical value in the promotion of human welfare has hardly yet received recognition in India. The average Indian of education and enlightenment regards it as a more or less pleasant diversion, and even some very high administrative officials are known to have remarked that it is a luxury for which Governments with ever-increasing demands on their resources can hardly be expected to find funds.[1]

1. This indifference to Anthropology is not found in India alone. Even in England, which may be regarded as the birthplace of modern Anthropology, anthropologists have until recently had to face not a little apathy on the part of the public and also lack of active help (in spite of verbal sympathy) from Government. In his presidential address at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1929, Dr. J. L. Myers gave a brief account of the struggles of anthropologists to secure a practical recognition of the claims of anthropological studies at the hands of the British Government and the British universities. It is due to the joint efforts of the British Association and the Royal Anthropological Institute that matters have improved to some extent in Great Britain and the Colonies. In 1929 not less than eleven universities in Great Britain provided instruction in one or more principal departments of Anthropology ; and it is now included among the subjects of study for candidates for appointment in the public services.

   Although the late Sir Richard Temple's proposal for an Imperial School of Applied Anthropology has been hanging fire since 1914, a Joint Committee for British Anthropological Research and Teaching has been constituted to discuss matters of common concern and promote an Ethnological Endowment Fund. With assistance from the Rockefeller Benefactions, the Percy Sladen Trust Fund, and the Rivers' Memorial Fund, the financial difficulties of field-work are to some extent minimized. The Selenca-Trimil Expedition to Java was financed by individual private munificence. The London University owes to private munificence a Chair in Anthropology and another in Sociology.

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Out of not less than seventeen recognized Indian universities, it is only the Calcutta University that teaches Anthropology as an independent subject for Degree examinations and also as a part of the History courses for the B. A. and M. A. Degrees. In the Bombay University, the course of Sociology for the M. A. examination includes Cultural Anthropology, and the question of introducing Anthropology as a distinct branch is, I am informed, now being considered by the Faculties ; in the Lucknow University, out of seven papers for the M.A. examination in Economics, only one is alloted to Social Anthropology ; and in the Mysore University, Anthropology forms an optional subject for the B. A. examination in History, and Sociology forms an optional subject in the B.A. examination in Psychology.

The published anthropological output of Indian universities has hitherto been comparatively meagre.[2] Although the provinces of Madras, the Central Provinces, Bihar, and Orissa are among the chief centres of primitive tribes in India, none of the five universities of Madras, Andhra, Annamalai, Nagpur and Patna has yet introduced Anthropology among its courses. The Madras University used to have Anthropology among its curricula some years ago, but has discontinued it.

As for the recognition of a knowledge of Anthropology as a qualification for employment in the public services, I do not know that it exists in any Government or State administration in India, except that in the enlightened State of Travancore an M.A. in Anthropology from the Calcutta University is working as Forest Officer. Although Anthropology used to form an optional subject for the I.C.S. examination held in India, it has been recently omitted from the list of subjects even for that examination !

Private help for anthropological research by way of endowments or otherwise is so far non-existent in India, although munificent endowments and donations have been made to universities by scientists and professional, commercial and landed magnates for the promotion of research in various other subjects. Yet in few countries is the need for anthropological studies, particularly among primitive communities, so urgent as in India, with its aboriginal population of about 25 millions on different levels of the lower culture, the more

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2. A thesis on the Katkaris by a scholar of the Bombay University has been published. It is reported that out of seven ethnographic monographs prepared by the scholars of the Lucknow University under the supervision of Dr. D. N. Mazumdar, three have been accepted for publication by the Government of the United Provinces ; Professor Mazumdar has published a fine monograph on the Ho tribe of Chota-Nagpur, and another comparative study of the Muṇḍā tribes written by him is reported to be in the Press. From the Calcutta University the late Professor Panchanan Mitra published a book on the *Prehistory of India,* and two very short ethnographic monographs by two Lecturers have been published by that University. A book on Indian Caste has been published by Dr. Ghurey of the Bombay University.

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primitive amongst them being at different stages of disintegration and in some cases even of decay and depopulation and a few almost on the verge of extinction.[3]

It is for anthropologists to study and place on record as much ethnographic material regarding these vanishing tribes as they can before such material is entirely lost ; and also to bring to the attention of Government the reasons for the depopulation of these tribes, and to suggest such measures as may still be adopted to prevent further havoc. As far back as 1922, the causes of the depopulation of primitive societies in Melanesia were discussed and remedies suggested in a collection of essays edited by the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers. In India, as in Melanesia and elsewhere, the main psychological cause of the depopulation of primitive tribes is the loss of interest in life brought about by change in their surroundings. As Dr. Rivers said :

'Interest in life is the primary factor in the welfare of the people. The new diseases and poisons, innovation and clothing, housing and feeding, are only the immediate causes of mortality. It is the loss of interest in life underlying these more obvious causes which gives them their potency and allows them to work such ravages upon life and health.'

Among economic causes, the increasing denudation of forests and the increasing rigours of the forest regulations are mainly responsible for the depopulation of those forest tribes in India that have so long lived by hunting and collecting jungle produce and occasionally by the wasteful method of *jhuming*, or shifting agriculture. To agricultural tribes, exploitation by their civilized neighbours, particularly landlords, land-grabbers and money-lenders, is a most formidable economic evil, against which the cumbrous and expensive remedy afforded by our law-courts is of little use.

The temptation of distillery liquor introduced by Government in some aboriginal areas is another evil that is working havoc, economically, morally, and physically, among both agricultural and non-agricultural tribes. Both these classes of our aboriginal population, in most Provinces and Indian States, suffer from the absence of any suitable administrative machinery for their guidance and protection, and of suitable education that may enable them to adapt themselves to changes in social environment.

A systematic study of the social organization and religious system, customs, habits, and mentality of aboriginal tribes is a necessary preliminary to a satisfactory solution of their special economic, social, and political problems. And to this end the encouragement by Government of anthropological studies and the application of the results of such studies under the direction of trained anthropologists would appear to be an indispensable administrative necessity. So far as the Colonies are concerned, the British Government appears to have for some time past been alive to the necessity of such a course. But unfortunately for India, very little has been done by the British Govenment beyond maintaining, for

3. The total population of the Khonds has declined from 125,624 in 1911 to 104,324 in 1931 ; the Asura tribes have declined from 5,099 in 1911 to 2,971 in 1931 ; the total Korwa population in India has declined from 9,592 in 1911 to 3,434 in 1931 ; the Toda population has declined from 748 in 1911 to 597 in 1931 ; and similar figures might be quoted for many other tribes.

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only a few short years, an Ethnological Survey Department, which was inaugurated in 1901, with Sir Herbert Risley as Director, and Thurston, Crooke, Luard, Russel, Enthoven and Rose as Provincial Superintendents of Ethnography, but has long been defunct. A few volumes on the Castes and Tribes of the major Provinces were published, and later some of the principal Native States also had similar volumes prepared for them.

Thanks to these volumes we now possess a general outline – only the barest outline, not always accurate—of the different castes and tribes of a major part of India. The neceesarily superficial Etnological Survey thus made, however, can serve as the foundation for more accurate studies of each particular tribe or caste.

But after their efforts to produce these volumes, the Government of India as well as our Provincial Governments appear to have gone to sleep, so far as ethnological investigation is concerned. The only thing that the Government of India has since done in the matter is to appoint a Government Anthropologist in the Zoological Survey of India, thus ignoring altogether the claims of Cultural Anthropology.

Only the Government of Assam have been alive to their responsibility in the matter of the utilization of anthropological knowledge in the interests of good government. Several years ago they fully appreciated that accurate and detailed knowledge of the social history and culture of the different primitive tribes should form the essential foundation on which any measures calculated to benefit them must be based. Accordingly they have generously financed a series of excellent monographs prepared by local officers with intimate knowledge of particular tribes, and, in a few cases, with scientific knowledge of Anthropology.[4] If, however, all the administrative officers of this and other Provinces and States with a large aboriginal population were required to possess adequate anthropological training, the fate of our aborigines might be very much brighter. Yet, as it is, Assam stands ahead of other Indian administrations in its attention to the welfare of its aborigines.

The law administered in the tribal areas of Assam is based on custom patiently investigated and gathered in the calm atmosphere of the villages from the tribal elders who are the guardians of such customs, and is carefully checked and re-checked before being finally recorded. The whole system of administration in Assam is based on such well-established customary law when not repugnant to more advanced ideas of morality and justice. This has tended to preserve the social structure of the tribes and helped them to adjust themselves to the new influences which inevitably impinge upon them. The Assam Government takes care to avoid frequent transfers of officers in charge of Hill Districts, and thus certain members of the services tend to become specialists in that branch of administration.

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4. An Honorary Director of Ethnography, versed in the Science of Man, examines every monograph before it is approved for publication. The present Honorary Director, Mr. J. P. Mills, was preceded by Dr. J. H. Hutton, now Professor of Anthropology at Oxford.

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Suitable steps are taken to make the education of the aboriginal boy a part of his ordinary village life rather than something exotic. In the primary stage boys are, wherever possible, taught in their own language. Only at a later stage do they learn Assamese or Bengali. A considerable body of their folk-literature has been published in the Khasi, Lushai, Ao Naga, Angami Naga, Sema Naga and Lhota Naga dialects. The practical side of education is not neglected. Boys are taught to carve in their traditional style, and schools can be seen built strictly on the tribal model, with carved posts and beams. The masters are themselves tribesmen and teach tribal dances, songs and games.

Where it is not too late to do so (as among the Khasis), tribal dress is encouraged, and with it indigenous spinning and weaving. Progress has also been made in agriculture, which is the basis of tribal economics. The use of irrigated terraces, known to some tribes, is being taught to others who do not know them. And, most important of all, the transfer of a tribesman's land to a plainsman is rigorously restricted. Special rules for the administration of justice and police have been made for each aboriginal district, having special regard to the needs and conditions of each district. The wholesome effects of this system of administration in the Hill Districts of Assam will be patent to any one who visits these areas. It is a delight to see some of these healthy, cheerful, jolly and contented hill-folk of Assam.

The only other area where I have seen something distantly approaching this happy state of things is in the Damin area of the Santal Parganas of the present Province of Bihar, where a simpler and more direct system of administration than in other areas of the Province has helped to preserve something of the simplicity of character and natural cheerfulness of the Paharia and to some extent of the Damin Santal. Their indigenous system of village self-government and of social organization has been more or less preserved.

The Bihar Government, by making a modest grant for anthropological research, originally to the Bihar and Orissa Research Society and subsequently to the Patna Museum, have hitherto helped anthropological work in that Province ; but with the advent of the new Reforms, notice has been given to stop the grant.[5] The Bihar Government also commenced publishing at their own expense a voluminous work entitled *Encyclopædia Mundarica*, compiled by the late Father Hoffmann. S. J., with the collaboration of some of his fellow-missionaries.

Beyond these few Provincial Government grants, I do not know of any other aid hitherto given by Indian Governments directly for ethnological research, except the annual grant (since stopped) which the Bengal Government used to make to the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1909 till recently for maintaining an Ethnological Bureau, and the annual

5. This grant was of some assistance in the publication of half-a-dozen monographs on certain tribes of Chota-Nagpur and Orissa.

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grant that the Assam Government used to make to the same Society for ethnographic work from 1893 down to about 1902.

I have no information of any other Province or State making any expenditure for anthropological research except the expenditure that was made by some of them for the preparation and publication of the *Tribes and Castes* volumes. And yet, if the welfare of the aboriginal tribes be taken to be among the special trusts of our Provincial Governors, as it has been declared to be by the Government of India Act, adequate expenditure for anthropological research among their aboriginal tribes and backward classes would, at least in the 'Excluded' and 'Partially Excluded' areas, appear to be not only legitimate but imperative, at least from the administrative, moral and humanitarian points of view. The only steps so far taken by most of our Provincial Governments consist in affording some facilities for the education of aboriginal children by opening some primary schools for them, and providing for a few—very few—stipends, and imposing certain restrictions on the transfer of agricultural holdings by aboriginals. The Governments of Bihar and of Orissa have each appointed an inspecting officer in the subordinate educational service to look after the education *not of aboriginal children* but only of the children of the 'scheduled' or 'depressed' classes. The Bengal Government has appointed a Circle Officer to look after the interests of aboriginal boys in a specially selected area ; and also

(a) to prevent illegal transfers of agricultural lands of the aborigines, (b) to see that they receive proper receipts for the rent they pay for their land, (c) to stop the levy of illegal *abwabs*, (d) to encourage the aborigines to organize themselves properly, and (e) to arrange for the defence of their lawsuits.

More promising are the arrangements that the Bombay Government have been planning for the amelioration of the condition of the 'Backward Class', including both the aborigines and the depressed classes. A Backward-Class Department, with a Backward-Class Officer, helped by three Assistants and a fairly adequate staff, was constituted on September 1, 1931. Since then the Department has been working according to its lights for the improvement of the Backward Classes, including the Bhils and other aboriginal and hill tribes. The Backward Class Officer is an I. C. S. man of a certain standing, and the Assistants are also well-educated Indians. The reports of the department show that fair amount of useful work has been done to remove social and other disabilities, to improve sanitation, education—primary and technical—employment in public services, and so forth. A Central Board assists the department by communicating the local grievances of these classes to the Backward-Class Officer. The Resolutions passed by the Board are forwarded to the Government for consideration and orders. The annual expenditure incurred by the department is about Rs. 35,000.

By Revenue Department Resolutions Nos. 4868/33 of 13th March and 25th May, 1937, the Governor of Bombay, in discharge of his special responsibility, appointed Mr. D. Symington, I.C.S., as a Special Officer for 4 months to investigate

(1) the present conditions of the Bhils with special reference to the disabilities from which they are suffering ; (2) to what extent these disabilities are capable of being reme-

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died by Government action ; (3) how far the measures taken by the Government in the past to improve the Bhils are adequate and whether they are being regularly and satisfactorily carried out ; (4) what new measures are required by Government ; (5) whether existing Government agencies and methods are adequate to enable the Government policy in respect of the Bhils to be regularly carried out and developed and the effets of Government activity of all forms on the Bhils to be ascertained, or whether additional Government agency or methods should be provided.

In order to collect as much material as possible before actually entering upon the inquiry, the Special Officer has circulated to the District Officers a Questionnaire relating to the activity of different departments of Government and of local bodies, and also non-official bodies such as missions and educational societies, for the improvement of the condition of the aborigines. A perusal of the Questionnaire and of the Reports of the Department makes an anthropologist regret that expert knowledge of Anthropology was not utilized in making the work of the Department more thorough and productive of far better results.[6]

This halting and inadequate policy followed by the British Government in India is in striking contrast to that followed in East Africa. In the Gold Coast and Nigeria, as well as in Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, special anthropological officers are appointed to administer the aboriginal areas.[7] Arrangements have also been made to give anthropological training to Colonial Administrative Officers not only during their probationary period but also during furlough. But no such training is compulsory for Indian civil servants, either Imperial or Provincial, nor for police officers of any grade or rank in India.

Any one having had occasion to watch at close quarters the administration of justice in certain aboriginal areas of India will be struck by the amount of injustice done, in spite of the best intentions, by judges and magistrates and police officers of all grades, owing to their ignorance of the customs and mentality of the aboriginal tribes they have to deal with. Unnecessary panic is sometimes caused to administrative authorities through such ignorance. I could cite many instances of this from my personal knowledge, but for want of space I shall content myself with only two.

Among the aborigines of Chota-Nagpur there is a social institution known as the *Parha* or *Pir* system, which is a federation of a number of villages, with a tribal leader

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6. It is satisfactory, however, to note that the Registrar of Co-operative Societies of the Government of Bihar, who is an Indian I.C.S. officer holding an English diploma in Anthropology, proposes to give a course of training in Anthropology to officers engaged in co-operative work in the villages.
7. The researches carried out by such African officers as Mr. N. W. Thomas in Sierra-Leone and Dr. Seligman (and Mrs. Seligman) and Dr. Evans-Pritchard in the Sudan have been of immense value not only to the administration of those areas but also to Anthropological Science.

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styled the 'Rājā' of the *Parha* and subordinate headmen known variously as '*Dewan*', '*Lal*', '*Pandey*', and so forth. Once a year, and also when some urgent matter of special concern to the *Parha* or to the tribe requires consideration, a meeting of the *Parha* Council is convened, through notices issued not only to the villages of the *Parha* but also to villages of neighbouring *Parhas*, fixing the date and place of the proposed meeting.

It so happened that an Inspector or Sub-Inspector of Police came across one of these notices during the days of the 'Non-Co-operation' agitation in 1921. He discovered that it purported to emanate from the Rājā of some Mūṇḍā *Parha*. In the name 'Rājā' the Police Inspector scented a plot to subvert the British Government in Chota-Nagpur and to set up a Mūṇḍā Rāj in the country. He at once communicated to the Deputy Commissioner, who has to rely on the report of his police officers, felt anxious and, knowing my interest in the aborigines, requested me to attend the meeting notified to be held on the following day over 40 miles from Ranchi. He showed me the Police Report, from a perusal of which I at once saw that it could be nothing more than the usual notice issued to convene a Parha-Panchayat or Assembly, and said so. But as he could not feel secure about the peace of the District, I agreed to go there, but requested him not to send police officers to the meeting-place as that might lead to difficulties. He did not, however, agree fully to this proposal, but promised to send only one or two constables and one or two other police officers in plain dress.

When I arrived at the meeting-place I found about seven or eight hundred Mūṇḍās Assembled and a couple of constables in plain dress. As the Mūṇḍās knew me to be a friend, they were very glad to see me. But shortly afterwards three or four Police Sub-Inspectors and Inspector arrived. As free ventilation of grievances, either real or supposed is a safety-valve which prevents discontent from seething within, I asked them to sit down and take notes but desist from making any remarks so long as the proceedings were peaceful. They agreed to this. When the assembled Mūṇḍās saw them they were reluctant to go on with their proceedings ; their leaders at first said that they would postpone the meeting to the next day, and put forward the excuse that in the meanwhile they wanted to discuss matters amongst themselves so as to be able to formulate their grievances. But on my explaining to them that they need have no apprehensions as the police would not prevent a free expression of their opinion, they agreed to go on and freely gave out their views.

The main themes of their deliberations were their agrarian grievances, educational needs, etc., and the means and remedies they considered suitable. At the end I explained to them which of their suggestions were impracticable and why, and which were feasible, and how they could best help themselves and get relief from the authorities ; and I promised to do what I could to represent their troubles to the authorities and secure such redress as was feasible. They were all so fully satisfied that they exclaimed : 'If we had you and sympathetic officials to attend our meetings, we should hold such meetings every day and submit our views and grievances freely'. Thus ended what improper handling might have turned into a violent demonstration.

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The villages of an Oraon Pahra of the Ranchi District have each a special pattern of flags which they carry in procession to their inter-tribal dancing-meets known as *Yatras*. A flag may be ceremonially presented by some important person or by one village owning a particular flag-emblem as its patent-right, so to say, to another. These flags, after consecration, are regarded with religious veneration and offered libations of home-brew before being taken out in procession, for they are believed powerfully to affect the fortunes of the village. The use by one village or *Parha* of the flag-emblem of another is regarded not only as an affront but as seriously affecting the fortunes of the village whose flag is imitated or robbed. The suposed ill-effects of the deprivation of the exclusive right of use include drought, famine, epidemics, and other calamities.

It so happened that when a new railway bridge was being constructed over a river near Lohardaga, the bridge repeatedly gave way before it could be completed. The contractor was told that the presiding deity or spirit (*bhut*) of one or the other or both villages across the river where the bridge was being constructed must have been displeased with the idea of a bridge there and caused it to break down. One of the villages was Hindu and the other Oraon ; so the contractor offered to repair an old dilapidated temple of the Hindu village and to present the Oraon village with a new flag containing the symbol of a railway train. This was done and the construction of the bridge was at length satisfactorily completed.

Now, as a railway train is believed to be moved by some mighty power, the acquition of the emblem of a railway train is naturally expected to bring an accession of power to the village. Another village, seeing this flag carried in procession at the annual *Yatra*, and appreciating the superior power or *mana*, that such an emblem brings, coveted the same power for themselves, and so got a huge flag, several yards long, and made the emblem of a railway train painted on it. At the next annual *Yatra*-fair held at Bhasko, where thousands of Oraons assemble for the *Yatra*, they carried their new flag in procession there, and the Oraons of the other village who regarded it as their exclusive right to carry the emblem of a railway train to the *Yatras* resented this authorized encroachment on their patent-right and attacked the offenders ; a free fight ensued and one or two men were killed. The police confiscated the flag of the offending party, and as a result of the criminal prosecution that followed some men were convicted and severely punished.

When the next annual *Yatra* approached, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate thought of taking precautions to guard against a fresh fight and requested me to help him in preventing trouble. Knowing the ideas of the Oraons about the possession of a flag containing the emblem of an object which is believed to be endowed with extraordinary power. I got a huge flag made and an *aeroplane* painted on it, and with it went to the village a day or two before the *Yatra*, talked the matter over with the Oraon elders of the village that had the previous year carried the offending flag, explained to them the superiority of an aeroplane to a railway train and the superior advantages of having an emblem of the aeroplane for their village, and ceremonially presented them with the flag I had taken with me. Next day they exultingly carried this flag in procession to the *Yatra* and no untoward

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event happened, for each of the two villages in question was satisfied with the powerful emblem it had acquired.

It will thus be seen that Anthropology can be very usefully applied in the service of the State, particularly in connection with primitive tribes, and that, for want of a systematic knowledge of the ethnography and mentality of the aborigines, administrative and judicial officers in aboriginal areas cannot avoid occasionally coming to wrong decisions.

It is high time, therefore, that our Provincial Governments as well as the Imperial Government should, for the improvement of the quality of administrative and judicial work, prefer candidates having anthropological training, in judicial, executive and other departments of Government, such as Forest and Excise, in aboriginal areas, and that officers lacking such knowledge should, at any rate, be required to undergo a course of training in Anthropology. This will not only improve the quality of judicial and executive work but also help the cause of science through the observations and investigations of aboriginal customs that might be recorded in the field by such trained officers.

Not only does primitive culture require to be studied in its original purity as far as possible, but the changes that have since come about through alien contact and outside influence require to be investigated and reckoned with by the administrator and judicial officer as much as by the social reformer and scientific student.

The cardinal lessons of Anthropology may, for one thing, be very usefully applied to certain crying problems of our national life. The study by men of different races and religions of the customs and manners of one another may help in promoting mutual amity and knitting ever more closely the bonds of unity between them, and thus eventually help to banish much of the communal animosity which is the bane of Indian national life at the present day.

Another practical national advantage that may accrue from a knowledge of Anthropology is that it may help us in devising and adopting suitable methods of acculturation, or rather 'inculturation', of our jungle tribes—*i. e.* the adjustment of these tribes to the dominant higher culture of their comparatively civilized neighbours by inoculating, so to say, the tribal cultures with such helpful elements of the higher culture as may, with suitable adaptations, be profitably assimilated in their social and cultural systems while at the same time helping to conserve indigenous customs and institutions of social value.

We who boast of a higher civilization undoubtedly have a heavy responsibility towards these weaker and less fortunate brethren whom we have so long culpably neglected. For have they not for centuries been ground down under the oppression of the rich and the powerful and groaned under various economic and social evils, not the least of which is the cruel stigma of untouchability ?

The modern study of Ethnology which began in the service of humanity[8] will, it may be fervently expected, find ever-increasing recognition in India, where the sum of

8. It is interesting to note that the very first English Ethnological Society owed its origin

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human misery has perhaps reached the maximum at the present day. Inspired by the universal fellow-feeling and active sympathy which a proper study of man is calculated to produce, some of us may be expected to exert ourselves to the best of our opportunities for the economic, educational, social, moral, and religious uplift of the aboriginal and depressed and suppressed classes.

Finally, the crowning achievement that is expected to result from the wider and more intensive spread of a scientific study of man is a realization of the unity of mankind and the brotherhood of man, which may, at some future day however remote, lead to the establishment of a genuine Federation of the World, a real Parliament of Man—not a mere political 'League of Nations' of the Geneva brand. Then there will be an end to the malady (in spite of the great refinement and various noble achievements) of modern civilization,—its crass egotism and rank selfishness, its aggressive wars, its gospel of race-superiority and race-hatred, its cult of temporal power based on brute force and the prostitution of the intellect by the invention of nefarious engines of destruction.

With the realization of the essential unity of *homo sapiens* which a scientific study of man reveals, the powers of Life, Light and Love will triumph over those of Death, Darkness and Discord, and the poet's vision will be realized :

Earth at last a warless creed,
A single race, a single tongue.

Ranchi.

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to humanitarian motives. Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, who was connected with the movement that culminated in the abolition of slavery in the British Colonies in 1833, founded in 1837 the 'Aborigines Protection Society'. As a young man he had already studied the Eskimos for two years, as he desired first to study and understand the aboriginal races sympathetically and then take suitable measures to protect them. It was in Dr. Hodgkin's room in London that, on February 7, 1843, the first English Ethnological Society was constituted with 23 members. And it was Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm, who had seen much service in India, who was chosen as its first President.

In 1839, Dr. James C. Pritchard read before the British Association at Birmingham a paper on 'The Extinction of Native Races' which created such an interest in the question that a grant was made and a Committee appointed to draw up a questionnaire for the collection of ethnological information. This questionnaire was finally drawn up in 1843 and is the prototype of the 'Notes and Queries on Anthropology' still published by the British Association.

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THE STUDY OF ANTHROPOLOGY FROM THE INDIAN VIEW-POINT

Anthropology or the Science of Man is a comparatively recent branch of systematized knowledge in Western countries. It seeks to understand Man—his origin, natural history, his unique adventure in the inner and outer courts of life, and the goal and meaning of human life and human society. On the physical side, it seeks to trace man's place in the animal kingdom and his gradual evolution from the brute-like existence of Pre-man and Proto-man and *Homo-Primigenius* to *Homo-sapiens* or Modern Man, and his gradual development as distinct racial units characterized by distinct physical types in different habitats. On the cultural side, Anthropology seeks to trace the processes by which social groups come to admit the growth of individuality, and different social groups come to constitute distinct cultural types with distinctive modes of subsistence and self-defence, clothing and housing, games, sports and amusements, social and economic organization, customs and institutions, languages, arts and sciences, government and laws, traditions, superstitions and beliefs, religion and morals calculated to bring about a gradual amelioration of the hard conditions of primitive life. By an analysis and comparison of different races, Anthropology, on the physical side, further seeks to classify tribes, races, and other human groups according to their predominant physical characteristics, and to determine the inter-relations of the various groups.

From our Indian view-point the ulterior object of the Science of Man is, or should be, to understand the meaning and goal of human existence —the trend, direction and aim of human culture and civilization,—the eternal spiritual reality behind life and society, the *sat* behind the *asat,* and to ascertain, as far as possible, the laws that govern the thought and behaviour of man in Society.

Western Anthropologists, by adopting the *a posteriori* objective scientific method of proceeding from the known to the unknown, have, since the days of Boucher de Perthes, gradully amassed evidence of fossilized skeletal and undoubted industrial remains of man in successive geological strata from Pleistocene up to recent times, and of his sub-human precursors in the Pliocene and even Miocene epochs.

In this way, by collecting and comparing, correlating and tabulating the fragmentary skeletal remains and the more numerous finds of weapons and ornaments and other artifacts of stone and bone, copper and bronze, ruins of buildings and sepulchral structures, drawings and paintings on rocks and in caves, and through the application of the stratigraphical method of the geologist and the palæontologist, western scholars have gradually built up a fairly continuous outline history of the physical and cultural evolution of pre-historic man.

Thanks to their researches, we are now in a position to form a rough general conception of the gradual evolution of man from the Pre-Chellian Trinil "Preman" (*Pithecanthropus Erectus*) of the end of Pliocene or the beginning of Pleistocene times and

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the Pekin Man (*Sinanthropus*), and the Piltdown (*Eoanthropus*), the Heidelberg and the Rhodesian "Protomen" of the lower Palæolithic culture and the mid-Palæolithic Neanderthal specimens of *Homo-primigenius* of Pleistocene times down to *Homo-sapiens* or *Homo-recens* —the modern type of man (descended from their late-Palæolithic prototypes of the Cro-magnon, Chancelade and Grimaldi types representing the precursors respectively of the present-day 'Caucasian', 'Mongol', and 'Negro'). It is to Western scholars, again, that we are indebted for our knowledge as to how from the eoliths of Pliocene times (leaving out of account some supposed eoliths of Miocene times) there successively evolved, in course of numerous milleniums, palæoliths, (comprising the Lower Palæolithic Chellian and Acheulian *Coups-de-poing* or hand-axes, the Mid-palæolithic Mousterian scrapers and 'points' and the Upper Palæolithic Aurignacian points and burins and scrapers of stone and bone, and the Solutrean implements of the laurel-leaf, willow-leaf and lozenge-shape patterns, the Magdalenean spear-throwers, harpoons and *batons-de-commandement* made of bones of the reindeer), besides carvings and engravings on bone and horn, sculptured human and animal figures in stone and bone, clay statuettes, mural decorations, cave paintings in colours, probably of magico-religious significance, mesoliths (including Azilian, Tardenoisian, Asturian, Maglemosian, Campignaan, and Kitchen-midden types), and neoliths and later implements of Copper and Bronze, and finally of Iron.

To supplement our imperfect knowledge of pre-historic man and his culture and migrations, Western Anthropologists have made an intensive study of the culture of existing primitive tribes, endeavoured to glean such hints as may be available of human society in pre-historic times, and sought to construct as approximate a picture of early human society as may still be possible at this vast distance of time. There can bo no question that the data thus collected in regard to pre-history and primitive culture constitute the foundations of the history of Man. They should therefore form the first chapter of every sound text-book of history.

Although this is generally admitted, yet in actual practice History is generally written and taught with the virtual omission or neglect of or at least nominal and perfunctory reference to what should properly constitute its opening chapter.

In this connection, it may be noted that Anthropology, in so far as it traces the movements of peoples and the migration and growth of culture in space and time, is not merely a static science but, like History, is dynamic in its outlook.

In modern India, however, there is a deplorable lack of interest in the scientific study of Man. Out of the seventeen Universities of India, it is only in the Calcutta University that Anthropology is now taught as an independent subject and also as a part of History. In the Bombay University Cultural Anthropology is partially taught as part of General Sociology, and in the Lucknow University as a part of Economics.

Yet, it is a fact, although it may sound strange to some that Anthropology is not

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altogether a new subject of study in this country.[1] In ancient India, the study of the Science of Man did not suffer from such neglect or indifference as at the present day. The ancient Hindu Ṛṣis did not compose nor teach History with the omission of Social Anthropology : they did not even conceive of composing history divorced from Social Anthropology, as a practical proposition. The different branches of modern learning known as History, Social Anthropology and Jurisprudence were represented in ancient Sanskrit Literature by the Purāṇas and the Saṃhitās or Dharma-Śāstras and the Gṛhya Sūtras. And the great Epics of India – the Rāmāyaṇa and particularly the Mahābhārata— form a rich treasure-house of data for social Anthropology as much as for History. Our Purāṇas attempt to present crude but coherent pictures of the origin of man and of the gradual development of human society and culture from the very beginning down to their own age. The degree of authenticity and correctness of the data supplied and the validity of the inferences drawn in those works are indeed matters of controversy.

Apart from this time-aspect of the Smṛtis and the Purāṇas which limits certain injunctions in the form in which they occur though not in their underlying idea to the particular age and country of their birth, the fundamental object of the authors of the Purāṇas was to study human life in all its aspects, to get at the spirit of life in society and to discover the ideal behind all social activities, and to hold up the ideal for the illumination and guidance of all. In ancient India the Purāṇas and the Itihāsas were the chief vehicles of public instruction. They were—and even now are—recited for the pleasure and the instruction of the masses.

Our Ṛṣis were not content to study only external influences on history. Their conception of the function of History and Anthropology and their methods of investigation differed indeed from those of modern scholars. But difference in view-point and methodology, should not justify a neglect of those works.

The Purāṇas were designed to convey popular instruction in History, Sociology and Ethics partly through simple and entertaining stories. And the Purāṇas and the Saṃhitās formed store-houses of contemporary social customs and usages, rites and ceremonies, ethics and politics and law. The Purāṇas, as sources of religious and moral instruction, furnish pictures of contemporary Indian society with its ideals and its different types and levels of culture. The ideals delineated therein have more or less regulated Hindu society down to this day, although particular injunctions of the Smṛtis now require to be modified to suit the changed conditions of these later times. Unlike the Śrutis or Vedas they are not *apauruṣeya* or inspired and as such eternal. The Purāṇas may be said to combine in them History, Cultural Anthropology, and Ethics. And the Saṃhitās, and Gṛhya Sūtras, collated the various social regulations and customs prevalent in various localities and communities of India, and, by arranging, classifying and correlating them, delineated contemporaneous Hindu society, as it was, and has since, more or less, been governed by a

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1. For over a score of years Anthropology was one of the subjects of the courses of studies in History in the degree and post-graduate courses in the University of Madras—*Editor.*

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system of socio-religious and religio-legal rules and ordinances suited to the different grades and levels of culture in the land. And the epics described the society thus organized. By way of illustration, I shall cite only a single instance, namely, the rules laid down for the regulation of marriage. The authors of the Saṃhitās collated the various modes of marriage then in vogue among different communities and in different parts of India, and arranged them into eight classes, named respectively, *Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prājāpatya, Āsura, Gāndharba, Rākṣasa,* and *Paiśāca.* Even the more obsolete among these forms such as marriage by capture (*Rākṣasa*) and by elopement (*Gāndharba*) or even by force or compulsion (*Paiśāca*), are still not unknown among some aboriginal tribes and backward communities of India. The Ṛṣi authors of the Saṃhitās realized that all these modes of acquiring a wife were more or less practised in different parts of the country, and so in order to establish and maintain order and harmony in society declared all these forms of marriage to be legal, but classified the first four forms as 'good', and laid down that one or two of these forms were 'suitable' (*praśasta*) for particular *Varṇas* or classes, some were "permissible" (*dharmya*) for want of a 'good' match but that the last two forms were 'reprehensible' for all classes, although 'permissible' for a Śūdra on his failure to secure a better match. Similarly, the ancient Hindu Ṛṣis recognized that the fundamental trend, subconscious in the beginning and increasingly manifest with evolving culture, of all rites and ceremonies, private as well as public, is the consecration of all natural functions (such as food-quest and sex-urge) and economic pursuits and of all domestic and social relations to spiritual ends, and built up elaborate social or socio-religious codes to regulate the lives of individuals and classes according to their respective types and stages of cultural evolution so as to enable them to attain in time successive higher levels of social and spiritual culture. Realizing that society, was broad-based on the entire body of established customs and usages, the authors of the Saṃhitās classified current customs and usages according to cultural stages or levels, and thereby rendered easy the path of social reform and social progress by graded stages.

To turn now to the need and importance of the study of Anthropology. An erroneous popular notion as to the object of the Science of Man is probably responsible for the neglect of the study of the Science. Some people would appear to imagine that the object of the study of Anthropology is to enable us to amuse ourselves and while away our leisure with diverting accounts of the quaint manners, customs and institutions of savage and semi-savage tribes. This is not, however, the case. Anthropologists should not limit their studies to primitive man alone. Those who have called Anthropology the "pre-civilized history of man" are not accurate in this characterization of the science. Indeed, the proper subject-matter of Anthropology is the entire life of mankind. The reason why students of Anthropology now pay greater attention to the investigation of Primitive Society is that the social life of primitive tribes is a most fruitful field for anthropological research, for primitive society exhibits the ground-plan on which the more complex structure that we call civilization has been built up.

The study of primitive societies should be followed up by the study of more complex

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and advanced societies, one after another. And different cultures at different levels should be analysed, compared and comprehended.

Each analytical study should be followed up by a synthetic comprehension of the whole. After studying individual tribes and communities, the anthropologist should study, contemplate, and seek to comprehend mankind in their totality. Then the forest would be no longer lost in the trees. The student's eager ears, will at first catch a soft music, and as he approaches nearer the truth, the music will swell louder and louder. Gradually the synthetizing mind of the student of Man will come to hear, contemplate and comprehend the entire gamut of the music of humanity as a whole. And such knowledge of human life is calculated to illumine his mind and chasten his heart.

It is to be expected that by pursuing the noble end which the Arya Ṛṣis have indicated for all Science, and by combining the objective and analytic methods of investigation followed by the scientists of the West, in combination with the subjective and synthetic methods emphasized by the Arya Ṛṣis of ancient India (who, too, did not neglect objective and analytic methods as well), Indian Anthropologists will succeed in establishing before long an Indian School of Anthropology for the pursuit of the Science of Man, which may be expected to give fresh inspiration even to Western students of the Science. And Hindu students of the science naturally look forward to the establishment of such a school by the Hindu University at Benares, for it was *Kāśī-Bārāṇasī* that was the greatest seat of Hindu learning in the past. And we Indians fervently expect that it will again prove one of the chief centres of up-to-date Hindu learning in all branches of Art and Science, ancient and modern, in the near future.

As for the practical usefulness of the study of Anthropology, it is a matter of regret that this is doubted by many among our educated men, even Senators, Syndics and administrators. These sceptics contend that in these days when the economic question is the all-absorbing problem of India, the study of Anthropology, which does not help the solution of that problem, should at least wait till better days arrive. To this the obvious reply would be, "Man does not live by bread alone". This is a truth which in this land of ancient Hindu Ṛṣis and sages should be self-evident. Further, though not affording any direct help in the solution of the bread-problem, the study of Anthropology may indirectly help in making the world a better and a happier place to live in.

One of the most insistent practical problems of India at the present day is how to socialize human emotions and energy to the utmost, and for this no study is more helpful than that of social Anthropology and social Psychology.

The light of Pure Knowledge and the illumination and joy that such knowledge brings is, of course, the fundamental object of all scientific study. But as the light of the sun produces fruit in trees, so too does the light of knowledge produce manifold fruit. As Bacon said, "Light first, fruit afterwards".

A study of Anthropology not only satisfies our intellect and our thirst for knowledge, but is calculated to expand our vision, chasten and elevate our feelings, and put us in tune with universal humanity and place us in touch with the Absolute. The realization of the

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truth that all humanity has originated from one and the same source, and is inspired by the same or similar currents of thought, feeling and desire, and is consciously or unconsciously proceeding towards the same goal, though with occasional setback here and collapse there, is calculated to expand the student's soul and induce a sense of its universality and infinity. As a result of this indefinite expansion of the self so as to include all humanity, the votary of the science of Man will find the latent springs of universal sympathy and fellow-feeling in his heart opened out ; and in contrast to the biological rivalry of the animal world he will be inspired with a sense of universal kinship with man in every clime and in every level of culture.

In the Purāṇas and other Hindu Śāstras, History and Social Anthropology have been treated as one and inseparable. The Purāṇas commence with an account of the beginning of things and proceed to describe methodi cally the different ages and epochs (as the Purāṇa writers conceived them) of human history (*manvantaras*), the influences of the Geography of the country, the deeds and achievements of famous Ṛṣis and rulers and culture-heroes, the genealogy of distinguished royal dynasties, wars and alliances, different levels and forms of social organization, customs and usages, religious beliefs and sacrificial and other rites and ceremonies current in the land. Originally handed down from teacher to pupil and carefully preserved in memory these accounts came in time, to be recorded in writing. These writings are accordingly styled "*Itihāsa-Purāṇa*" or "History and Tradition" (vide *Vāyu Purāṇa*, I. 31-32). Some scholars, particularly most Western scholars, are unwilling to admit the *Purāṇas* to the rank of History. In fact, in compiling the *Purāṇas* in the form of easy narratives, their authors relied in great part on traditions, perhaps in part on conjectures and probabilities, and in part on direct *a priori* cognition or 'intuition' which some would now term 'imagination'. But yet it would not be proper to charge their authors with a lack of historical sense. The Purāṇas record the virtues and achievements of the long galaxy of eminent heroes of thought, action and feeling who, each in his day, moulded their age and led their countrymen along successive stages in the ladder of cultural progress. In fact, such great men and teachers appear from time to time in every race of men with "revelations fitted to their growth of mind".

It is on these heroes of thought, action and feeling, who with their kindling ideas and throbbing words, and inspiring message and example, act as levers to lift society to higher levels by introducing new ideals and view-points—it is on them that the measure and standard of a people's culture depend. Such great men are the real makers of a peoples' history. It is their achievements that constitute the basis of their country's history, just as the life-perceptions of the great thinkers of a nation form the basis of their philosophy. In the words of the great American poet James Russel Lowell,

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,
The compact nucleus, round which systems grow;
Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,
And worlds impregnate with the central glow.

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The Hindu Ṛṣis recognized the more outstanding among these epoch-making heroes of thought and action as "Khaṇḍa Avatāras" or partial incarnations or manifestations of the Deity, and reserved the appellation of "Purṇa-Avatāras" or complete incarnations to such rare ideal beings in human form as Rāmacandra and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Christ and the Buddha. As dynamic forces of culture, the outstanding great men of a people or community are, at any rate, as important as, or perhaps more important than, such factors as environment, inherited tendencies and contact of races and cultures. Every fresh step in cultural evolution, every epoch-making idea or invention, or a fresh line of thought, feeling, and activity has been directly initiated by some such great and representative man, although his social, intellectual or spiritual environment and the previous life-history of his race and people, may have played no inconsiderable part in his mental and spiritual make-up and also in suggesting the new idea.

However that may be, the point that I should here like to emphasize is that an adequate comprehension of the history of any country or people is hardly possible without a proper conception of the earlier chapters of the history of mankind. What is now popularly known as 'History' presents only a bald picture of the achievements of a people's heroes of action and thought, not the complete picture of the entire life of the society in question. The vast, silent daily life of its men and women organized in society, and their economic, social (including political and religious) aspirations and activities form the real life of a community, which the anthropologist seeks to visualize and understand. The life and culture of a society or of a nation (which constitutes the social envirenment of its individual members) is the outcome of the combined forces of the intellect, emotions, and will of its people reacting on the natural environment through ages. Intellect, feeling and will are interdependent parts of the one organic whole ; and the life and culture of a community or people cannot be adequately delineated if we omit to take into account the activities and influences of any one or other of these co-related faculties of the individual community in working out the ensemble of economic, social, political, aesthetic and religious adjustments of the social group in question. The Sociology and Culture, in general, of a people are the outcome of their collective psyche. The History of a people cannot be complete without an adequate account of these. And Sociology and Culture are the main constituents of the Science of Man.

The sages of Ancient India fully appreciated this truth. And so, side by side with the history of kings and dynasties, the Sociology and Culture in general of the Indian people formed an integral part of the Purāṇas. As ancient Hindu Ṛṣis were more concerned with inner nature of man than with his outward appearance, what Westen Anthropologists call Physical Anthropology did not, as such, particularly attract their curiosity or attention, except in so far as it may serve as an index to the characteristics of the inner man. Even some Western anthropologists, now appear to doubt, to some extent, the probative value of anthropometry.

I began by saying that the subject-matter of Anthropology forms the first initial topic of the history of human civilization. The universal Brotherhood or rather unity of

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Man, to a recognition of which the study of Anthropology leads, is the last word of history and, indeed, of all science. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that Anthropology constitutes the essential history of human culture and civilization as a whole. It not only reveals the historical and cultural process but also seeks to explain it in terms of the mind and spirit which are the determinants of all human history.

The advantages of the study of Anthropology do not end with the acquisition of knowledge, the illumination of the intellect, and expansion of the heart and soul of the anthropologist. A knowledge of the customs and mentality of the peoples with whom they have to deal, would enable the preacher and minister of religion, the teachr, the social and religious reformer, the legislator, the administrator and the judge to discharge their respective duties with greater efficiency. In this way, the results of the study of Anthropology might be usefully applied to the practical problems of national life. And now that India is getting *svarāj*-minded, the importance of the study of Anthropology which may be expected to help in knitting the bonds of unity between different castes and creeds, races and communities, should be adequately realized and practically recognized by the universities and administrations through the creation of Chairs of Anthropology in all our Indian Universities, and by demanding anthropological knowledge from officers holding administrative and judicial posts under the State.

However that may be, inspired by the universal sympathy and fellow-feeling that a real study of man is calculated to produce, some anthropologists may be expected to exert themselves, to the best of their lights and their ability, for the uplift of the numerous backward tribes and castes of the country who have been long ground down under the oppression of the powerful, and blinded by ignorance and the superstitions of ages, and have been groaning under various social and economic evils. A knowledge of their social anthropology will inspire us to do our duty by these lowlier brethern of humanity whose power of movement has been so long retarded and almost stopped by the pressure of adverse economic, social and political conditions ; and who have so long been more or less cut off from real healthy contact with communities of higher culture. The more cultured races, who by the grace of God, have had the good fortune of enjoying a favourable environment and contact and partial intermixture with higher races and cultures in the past, have naturally evolved in civilization with an ever-increasing momentum. And accordingly the civilized races and peoples of the world have each a heavy moral responsibility towards these more backward peoples. But how infinitely little has so far been done by civilized man towards the amelioration of the hard lot of these weaker brethern of theirs ! Indeed, we in India so far have thought little and done less for these backward relations of ours. It is high time that we should realize that it is our bounden duty to do all we can for the spread of education and true enlightenment among them and afford such help as we can towards their social and economic betterment. With the help of a scientific study of their culture and mentality, we may also be in a position to help them in avoiding the pitfalls on the road to civilization, and in eschewing the poison which sometimes accompanies the sweets of civilization. Thus can the knowledge of Anthropology be fruit-

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fully applied in the service of our fellow-beings, even to the extent of helping the solution of the economic problem of those communities.

As I have said, the most precious fruit that the study of Anthropology is calculated to yield is a realization of *maitri* or the Brotherhood of Man. Such realization of the one Eternal Self in all by the leaders of thought and action in different parts of the world may be expected to lead in the end to the establishment of a Parliament of Man, a genuine Federation of the World—not a mere political League of Nations of the Geneva brand. Then there will be an end of the malady of modern civilization, its crass-egotism and rank selfishness, its aggressive wars, its gospel of race-superiority and race-hatred, its estimation of material progress as the be-all and end-all of human societies. its cult of temporal power based on brute force and on the prostitution of the intellect by the invention of diverse nefarious engines of destruction. With the realization of the essential psychic and spiritual unity of mankind, which a scientific study of man reveals, our world-consciousness may be supplemented, chastened and elevated by spirit-consciousness—the consciousness of the one Eternal self in all. Then will be realized the poet's vision :

"Earth at last a warless world,
A single race, a single tongue".

When in the light of anthropological knowledge, we contemplate the ever-expanding course of the life of humanity from its earliest dawn, we realize the truth that the seed of progress which God had implanted in man at the beginning of the present cycle of creation has been evolving ever since and will go on evolving till the end of the cycle, although in some cases it has lain more or less dormant for long centuries awating the vivifying influence of contact with progressive cultures.

"Only That which made us meant us to be mighter by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the human eye,
Set the shadow of Himself, the Boundless, through the human soul,
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward in the whole."

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

SEVENTH ORIENTAL CONFERENCE

I am thankful to the Executive Committee of the All India Oriental Conference for doing me the honour of electing me as President of its Anthropological section once again. According to orthodox practice I might adopt either of two courses in my Presidential address. I might either give an account of the progress of anthropological research in India or else select some special topic of anthropological interest as the theme of my address. In my Presidential address to the Anthropological section of the Indian Science Congress in 1920, I gave an account of the progress of anthropological research in India from the beginning of modern research down to that year, and later, I pursued the thread of the story down to the year 1930 in my Presidential address to the Anthropological section of this Conference at its last session. As for the progress of anthropological research in India since then, the story may be told in a few minutes. And for the rest of the hour allotted for this address I propose to deal at some length with a subject which appears to have of late been attracting marked attention from scholars, administrators, social reformers and the Indian public in general. That subject is the origin of Caste in India. Besides interesting chapters on Caste in the different volumes of the Census of India, 1931, as many as five scholarly books and several magazine articles on the Indian Caste system have been published within the last three years. As for the advance of anthropological research in this country during the last three years, the increasing output of anthropological articles in our Journals—scientific as well as popular—is a hopeful sign of progress. As an examiner in Social Anthropology in the Calcutta and Bombay Universities and as editor of an anthropological journal I had occasion during the last few years to come across some anthropological papers of great merit and greater promise from students and teachers of the Calcutta, Bombay, Lucknow and Benares Universities. One of these theses, it is gratifying to note, was from a lady graduate of the Bombay University who has made an extensive sociological study of the Amil Community of Hyderabad in Sindh. Another on the Chodhras of Gujarat by Mr. B. H. Mehta of the Bombay University is one of the best theses I have come across from an Indian Post-graduate student. I am glad to see him here today as one of our fellow delegates. It may be reasonably expected that these students will manage to keep up their interest in anthropological research after they leave their Universities and enter the practical arena of life. If students like him receive proper encouragement and help, I have no doubt that the science of anthropology as well as the States or provinces where they may carry on their investigations will be immensely benefited. There is hardly any sphere of life, any vocation or

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occupation which does not afford opportunities for the study of man in Society What is needed most is a lively and life-long interest in the subject.

As for important book literature on Indian Ethnology during the period in question, the year 1931 saw the publication of the further volume of *Mysore Tribes and Castes* edited by Rao Bahadur L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, and as many as three books on the Indian Caste system, namely, *The Caste System of Northern India* by Mr. E. A. H. Blunt, *The Origin and Growth of Caste in India* by Prof. N. K. Dutt, and *Indian Caste System : A Study* by Mr. C. Hayavadan Rao. In the year 1932, were published, besides a monograph on *Hindu Families in Gujarat* by Rao Bahadur Govindbhai Desai two more works on the Indian Caste System, *Caste and Race in India* by Dr. G. S. Ghurye, and *Indian Caste Customs* by Mr. L. S. O'Malley.

This increasing attention to the question of Caste appears to be opportune at this moment. The Anti-Untouchability movement which is now in active progress in India has helped in bringing the question of Caste origins prominently to the fore, and it will not, therefore, I think, be inappropriate if I take up that question as the theme of the present address.

The institution of Caste has remained the foundation of the Hindu social structure for several centuries, and has given to Hindu society its most distinctive character. Social divisions graded on the basis of occupation, each with more or less solidarity of its own and observing more or less the principle of class endogamy, have indeed existed in various countries and communities in the past as well as in the present—among, for example, the ancient Romans and ancient Egyptians, some modern European people and even among some modern primitive peoples like the Malagasy of Madagascar and the Carrier Indians and some other divisions of Western Dene of North America. But nowhore do all these features—common heredity, occupation, endogamy and commensality—appear in such connection and in such a strictly organized and rigid shape as they do in the Caste system of India. This is what makes the Indian Caste system a unique form of social organisation. And this is why a number of scholars have assiduously sought to trace the origin and history of Caste, and have expressed divergent views as to the process by which this unique system has evolved and the basis upon which it rests. But it cannot be said that a final solution of the Caste problem has yet been reached.

The different current theories regarding the origin of the Caste system are familiar to you all. And I shall not therefore tire your patience by attempting any account of them. Besides the orthodox Hindu traditional theory of the divine origin of Caste set forth in the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda* and restated in the tenth chapter of the *Manu-Saṃhitā*, there are, as you know, over half a dozen theories put forward by modern scholars, mostly European. There are the occupational and guild-theory of Nesfield ; Ibbetson's theory of a combination of tribal origins, functional guilds and Levitical religion ; the racial and hypergamous theory of Risley ; the family or gentile theory of Senart, the Dravidian theory of the origin of the priestly-class put forward by Slater ; the theory of Dr. Ketkar, who assigns in most cases a tribal and in some cases an occupational

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origin for the different castes ; and finally the theory adumbrated by Dr. Hutton in the *Census Report of India* 1931. This latest theory is a composite one formed by combining, with his own suggesion regarding the local origin of the occupational taboo, such selected elements from previous explanations as the Proto-Australoid origin of food-taboos suggested by Oldenberg and Gait, the Dravidian origin of the priest-magician class suggested by Slater, the influence of hypergamy and kinship suggested by Risley, the functional origin of caste stressed by Ibbetson and Nesfield, and the influence of Indo-European pride of blood and social rank suggested by most previous writers.

Valuable as some of these modern explanations are, as analyses of the different features of the Caste system, they do not appear to me to take us far enough in our search for the root-causes of the institution of Caste. The genesis of any social institution is, I think, to be sought primarily in psychology and only secondarily in the history of racial migrations and the borrowing or imitative faculty of man. The ultimate explanation of a social institution like caste has to be given primarily in terms of the group-ideal or ideas and sentiments behind it and only secondarily in terms of environment, racial admixture, and cultural contact or the intercommunication and interaction of ideas between human groups. Of all the accounts of the growth of Caste given by recent writers, Dr. Ketkar's analysis, I think, goes much nearer the roots, though he does not appear to have carried his search to the ultimate bedrock on which the foundation of Caste rests. He hits the mark when he says that the chief principle on which the entire (Caste) system rests is that of purity and pollution ; but he stops there and does not proceed to analyse it further, and declares that "in order to accomplish equality, the doctrine of purity and pollution will have to be abandoned." "To reform Hinduism," says he, "is to transform Hinduism into Indianism." I would modify this dictum and say that to reform Hinduism is to seek to replace caste by the old Hindu ideal of Varṇa based on the Guṇas.

True, as Dr. Ketkar says, the root-principle on which the Caste system rests is the principle of purity. But this is not merely outward "śaucam." This purity, in its ultimate analysis, is the principle of spirituality—the dominance of the soul, of the real man or god in man over the senses. Leaving out the present loss of elasticity in Indian castes, what distinguishes the Caste system of the Hindus from the class divisions of other communities is that the position assigned to the Brahmins and other castes in the caste hierarchy was determined not by wealth or outward considerations but by the respective degrees of "inner purity" or Sattvaguṇa believed to inhere in their respective traditional functions, which they were required to maintain, and, as far as possible, at one time endeavoured to maintain. The disintegration of the *Varṇa* system commenced when that endeavour began to slacken and exaggerated attention to supposed ceremonial or outward purity began to overshadow, and ultimately, well-nigh smothered, the ideal of purity of the soul. However, to all this I shall revert later.

In order to be able to properly evaluate the different current hypotheses as to the origin of Caste and to form an opinion of our own about it, we must first try to get, with

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the help of all avilable data, as clear an idea as possible of the ethnic and social history of the Indian people, From such a study we may expect to get some idea of the contributions, that may have been made by any one or more of the racial components of the Indian people, to the ensemble of features that go to make up the Indian Caste system. And in this way, we may perhaps get at the core of ideas and sentiments on which this unique system of Hindu Castes rests.

As for the main racial elements that have entered into the composition of the Indian people, general authoritative opinion until recently indicated four such elements, namely, the Pre-Dravidian element entering India either from the north-east or from the north-west, the Dravidian element entering from the north-west, the Aryan element entering also from the north-west, and the Mongolian element entering from the north-east. In the light of recent researches, a few more elements have to be added. The following inferences that may be provisionally drawn from the inadequate material so far available might appear to be reasonable, although by no means final. There is a tendency among many modern Indian scholars to discard the theory of the migration of Indo-Aryans from outside India and some are even inclined to think that the cultured Dravidian castes of Sothern India also formed one race with those generally described as Indo-Aryans. So far as our available evidence goes, the utmost that can be said is that the northern and north-western boundaries of the country of the Indo-Aryans once probably extended considerably beyond its present limits and that the further progress of Indo-Aryan occupation to what is now known as Hindusthan was merel a movement south and south-eastwards from the then northern and north-western parts of what might be called 'Greater India.'

As for the long-headed Dravidians and the broad-headed and medium-headed Gujaratis and Bengalis, as both the Mediterraneans and the Alpines are different branches of the same Caucasian and even the Proto-Australoids belong to an earlier branch of the same Caucasic race, it can be said that there is a fundamental racial unity in the main population of both Northern and Southern India. Indeed, ancient Hindu sociologists would appear to have ignored distinctions of race as tending to separatism and regarded the whole of mankind as an organic unity presenting three or four psychological types.

(1) The earliest inhabitants of the country were in all probability a small, black, curly-haired, Negrito race allied to the Mincopis of the Andaman Islands, the Semangs of the Malay Peninsula and the Aetas of the Phillipines. Their only traces are perhaps to be found in the curly hair, dwarfish stature, snub nose, and certain other features occasionally met with among such wild hill tribes of the extreme south of Iindia as the Kadars and Urulas of Travancore, and in rarer instances among the hill-tribes of the Central hill belt of India. Dr. J. H. Hutton in the latest Census Report of India writes : "In the Kadars and Urula (Urali ?) of the forests of the extreme south of India occasional individuals with frizzly hair and low stature and Negro-like features are very suggestive of survivals of the Negrito race."

As separatism, and suspicion and avoidance of strangers are essential features of

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Negritic Society in the Andamans, for example, similar too, we may infer, was the state of things among the earliest Negrito inhabitants of India. The present day Kadars and the Uralis of the extreme south of India are really tribes in a comparatively early stage in the process of Hinduization, and still stand outside the Caste system. So, we may safely infer that they had no contribution to make towards the formation of Caste.

(2) The next undoubted occupation of India was by a dolichocephalic or long-headed pre-Dravidian race, sometimes called Proto-Australoid, who might have entered India either from the north-east or as appears more probable, from the north-west, or perhaps from submerged 'Lemuria' on the south-west, and in time occupied the valleys of the rivers of Northern India and gradually spread in all directions and either absorbed or routed the original Negritic population.

Dr. Hutton thinks that the origin of the Proto-Australoids must have been in Palestine. Wherever the pre-Dravidian might have originated, the racial type of the Indian Proto-Australoid would appear to have been ultimately fixed in India under the influence of Indian climatic conditions ; and he is thus the true aborigine of India. From him appear to have been descended most of the tribes whom we style the Indian aborigines, although some branches of them would appear to have been slightly differentiated from the rest in time through cultural and perhaps, to a less extent, racial admixture with subsequent in-coming races. From northern India they in time spread to the extreme south of India and beyond, the Veddahs of Ceylon being perhaps their southern-most representatives. On the east their spoor may be traced through Burma and the Malay Peninsula to distant Australia.

The introduction of neolithic culture and handmade pottery into India has probably to be attributed to them and also the *Valaitadi* or boomerang still retained by some rude Kallan and Maravan families of Southern India. The basis of their social organisation would appear to have been totemistic and exogamous clans as at this day, though their present patrilineal structure appears to have been preceded by a matrilineal system. They were and still are an essentially democratic race. Most of the Proto-Australoid tribes of the present day observe certain taboos on food cooked by a stranger or cooked food touched by a stranger's hand, and do not generally marry outside their tribe.

The taboo on food from strangers is, however, not peculiar to the Proto-Australoids but is almost universal in primitive society and has for its basis the fear of the unknown. The primitive man believes that cooked food is charged with some spiritual emanation, (like the '*mana*' of the Melanesians) from the person who cooks it or handles it and therefore must be avoided.

As for marriage outside his tribe, however, the taboo on tribal exogamy does not appear to have been altogether inexorable. Indeed among primitive tribes outside India. although the taboo on food from strangers is common, yet compulsory tribal endogamy is rare except among people who have among them one or more communities who ply strange arts and crafts not known to the forefathers of the tribe, or among peoples like the Polynesians, Trobirand Islanders, the Masai and the Salish who have advanced far

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enough to have evolved a stratification of classes by rank. This is probably the reason why it is more among the settled agricultural tribes than among the nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes that tribal endogamy is more strictly observed.

Thus strangers and particularly strangers plying strange arts and crafts or possessing an unfamiliar speech, worshipping strange gods, and having strange manners and customs, have always been objects of superstitious fear and avoidance to the Proto-Australoids as to other primitive people. Such strangers, it is believed, can ply their strange arts and crafts with the help only of spirits of evil power, and so contact with them must be avoided as much as possible. Similarly the primitive taboo on marriage or intercourse with women of strange tribes worshipping strange gods might be due partly to a fear of the evil eye or uncanny potentiality of alien women, who may have strange spirits for their families or guardian-spirit, likely to bring ill-luck to the family or the community of her husband.

Thus, among the essential features of the Hindu caste system, the commensal taboo and, to some extent, the connubial taboo, have been always observed by the Proto-Australoid tribes as well, but from superstitious or what might be called "quasi spiritual" ideas, and certainly not from any idea of ceremonial purity as among Caste Hindus.

As for the other essential feature of the caste organisation, namely, hierarchical gradation of classes or families in a tribe and the superior position of the priests over the commonalty, it is generally repugnant to the essentially democratic basis of Proto-Australoid social organisation. They have no priestly caste, because every head of a family is its own priest. In the settled agricultural villages, however, a village priest is indeed elected for each village, and in some tribes his position has become hereditary ; but all the same there is no social distance whatsoever between the priest and the rest of his fellow-villagers. He is merely a *primus interpares*, a chief among equals. Democracy is a marked feature of Proto-Australoid social polity, and caste-hierarchy would presumably be inconsistent with democracy.

In some instances, however, such a hierarchical gradation of the different clans composing a tribe appears to have been made. But this has occurred only in comparatively recent times and that under Hindu influence either direct or indirect.

The inference that we may draw from our imperfect knowledge of Pre-Dravidian India derived mostly from our knowledge of the surviving Pre-Dravidian tribes of India supplemented by most meagre hints in ancient Sanskrit literature, is that the Pre-Dravidians were composed of a congeries of tribes at different levels of culture and social organization, some living as primitive hunters, fishers and food-gatherers, some as primitive industrialists or artisans, a very few as pastoralists, some as shifting agriculturists, some without any effective differentiation of occupation and a few as settled agriculturists. These varions tribes occupied different localities and differed from one another not only in occupation, but in their dialects, in social organization, in some of their customs and in their gods. Owing to the primitive man's fear of the unknown stranger and also to some extent owing to a consciousness of differences in their ways of life, they naturally avoided, so far

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as possible, intermarriage and interdining, and owing to conflict of economic interests or sentimental prejudices would not unoften be engaged in mutual hostilities. The extensive area and the vast distances of the country naturally aided the multiplication of tribes and sub-tribes, and mutual suspicion and prejudice.

Time instead of tending to unify and consolidate them into a few comprehensive groups helped in multiplying the number of different endogamous groups and in increasing the differences between them. It was an era not of castes or classes but of tribes ; there was no central authority like the priestly class or the kingly class that might seek to co-ordinate the different tribal groups or divisions of the people. Each tribe regarded itself as good as or superior to the others. Thus the spirit of separatism that makes for caste would appear to have been rampant amongst the Proto-Australoids, but their democratic social organization prevented the growth of caste among them. Most Muṇḍā tribes still generally keep themselves haughtily aloof from other tribes and castes of their area.

(3) Next, there appears some evidence of a slight Melanesian strain in the hilly regions between Assam and Burma and also on the Malabar coast of India. The Melanesian type probably originated in miscegenation between the Oceanic Negrito and the Proto-Australoid from India ; and such slight Melanesian migration into India, as may have taken place, brought back with it no additional cultural elements worth mentioning except perhaps such an artefact as the shouldered neolithic celt. As regards elements that went to the formation of the Indian Caste system, no contribution would appear to have come from this race.

(4) The elusive Mongoloid touch in the facial appearance of some Muṇḍā tribes may perhaps be atributed to a slight strain of Paroean or Southern Mongoloid blood from the east across the Bay of Bengal. The suspicion of a Mongoloid element only attaches to the facial appearance of certain Muṇḍā tribes, and has no association whatsoever with caste or any other cultural trait.

(5) The next wave of immigration into India appears to have been that of an early branch of the Mediterranean race who probably came by way of Baluchistan and brought with them the beginnings of civilization including a rudimentary knowledge of agriculture, the practice of urn-burial,the erection of rude stone memorials to the dead, the use of neolithic implements, pottery, the art of primitive navigation and a new speech. They were, we may reasonably presume, composed of several sections or tribes. While some mixed with the Pre-Dravidian aboriginal population of Northern India, and one or more sections probably migrated ahead of the rest and mingling their blood with the Proto-Australoids in the river valleys of northern and eastern India passed down through Assam and Burma where, with an infiltration of Mongolian blood, they became the Indonesian or Nesiot race now submerged. A section of Nesiots at a later period probably crossed over to Southern India, for a slight Melanesian strain is suspected in the Malabar, as I have already noticed.

The main body of these early Mediterranean immigrants, finding the Proto-Australoids then dominating in the river valleys of Northern India, appear to have gradually

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moved across the chain of hills that divide Northern India from Peninsular India and made themselves masters of what afterwards came to be known as the *Drāviḍa* country which was then more sparsely inhabited by the Pre-Dravidians and perhaps some remnants of the original Negritos than Northern India. The sections of the early Mediterranean immigrants who stayed on in Northern India were in time mostly absorbed in the dominant Pre-Dravidian population of the north. Most of the new immigrants into Southern India, whom we may call the Proto-Dravidians, and their descendants, too, gradually received varying degress of infusion of Proto-Australoid blood, and in time worked out a civilization now known as the Dravidian culture. To them perhaps India owes the first establishment of settled villages and a village organization with its village officials, village deities and sacred groves.

In course of time the Proto-Dravidians developed such arts and crafts as they had brought with them and acquired others. They had either acquired a rudimentary knowledge of metallurgy before they came to the south or independently developed it in their new home. The old copper workings near Maktiala in the Kistna District of Hyderabad may perhaps be attributed to them. Near the old mines Bruce-Foote discovered a polished earthenware vessel of unique shape, and some seven earthenware bowls and bowl-dishes of iron-age types.[1] In fact, few prehistoric copper artefacts have been discovered in Southern India, which appears to have passed direct from neolithic culture to Iron culture. To these Proto-Dravidians are probably to be attributed the dolmens, cairns, menhirs, and other megalithic structures in different parts of Southern India, the large terracotta funeral urns each with three or four legs, the coloured and glazed prehistoric pottery of various shades and sizes, bronze figurines of animals and birds, iron weapons used in hunting and warfare, agricultural implements, metal ornaments and household utensils, beads of quartz crystal and various coloured stones which archæologists have unearthed from various prehistoric sites in the South ; or perhaps these were subsequent acquisitions of the Dravidians through cultural contact with the later Mediterranean immigrants of India of whom I shall presently speak and whom I would identify with the 'Asurs' of ancient Sanskrit literature. It appears more certain, however, that the snake cult so widespread in Southern India is a contribution of the Proto-Dravidians. In course of time, their descendants, the Dravidians, acquired various arts and industries, and became great builders, and long before the beginning of the Christian era, developed a considerable civilization and consolidated themselves into powerful kingdoms.

Though it does not appear likely that caste in the full connotation now attached to the term, was evolved in the Dravidian South at any time prior to the advent of the Brahmanical Aryans much less in neolithic times, it is probable that with the establishment of settled villages a rudimentary division of labour among the village population gradually came into existence ; and it is certain that when in course of time Dravidian civilization had made a fair progress, various occupational groups must have been formed, and the

1. Indian Prehistoric and Protohistoric Antiquities, (1916) p. 129.

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natural tendency of such groups to endogamy and hereditary function must have been active. With the evolution of chieftainship or kingship, a privileged nobility consisting of Chiefs and their relatives and warriors must also have arisen. And this nobility would naturally seek to restrict marriage within their own class ; and by their very position would occupy a higher rank than the commonalty or the occupational groups who too might gradually come to have gradations of social position among themselves.

Dr. Slater on the strength of certain passages from the *Ṛgveda* in which castles, cities and the wealth of Asuras and their use of magic are referred to, is dogmatic as to the existence in Pre-Aryan Dravidian India of a priest-magician class or caste, and says[2] "it points directly to the conclusion that the Brahmin caste itself, and its position of dominance over the Kṣatriya or warrior caste is a Dravidian institution."

It does not, however, appear to me that there exists any substantial evidence in support of the contention that the Pre-Aryan Dravidians had evolved any specific hereditary priest-magician class which could be called a 'Caste.' Indeed some South-Indian castes like the Kallans and Valains, Panans and Parayans have some priest-magicians but they do not appear to form either a separate and hereditary class or caste, because any one among them who has the requisite psychic temperament may, with or without training, qualify himself for communication with the spirits and become competent to propitiate them by proper offerings or sacrifices. And generally these Dravidian priest-magicians of the present day hail from the lowest classes. The nearest approach to a sacred priest in the proper sense of the term among the existing primitive population of the Dravidian south is the *Palol* or dairyman-priest and his assistants the Kaltmokh[3] and the *Wursol* among the Todas of the Nilgiri hills. "His (the Palol's position among the Todas," says Dr. Rivers,[4] "is exactly that of a priest upon whom it is incumbent to maintain a very high degree of ceremonial purity...If the *Palol* is touched by an ordinary man he loses his office and at once ceases to be a sacred personage, but the person who touches him incurs no penalty...An indication that he may at one time have been regarded as divine is to be found in the special classes of the Kindr prayer." The Toda *Palol*, however, becomes an ordinary person the moment he ceases to hold office. Although a *Palol* must be selected from the Teivaliol division of the tribe, "there is not the slightest trace," says Dr. Rivers, "of the belief that their right to exert the highest priestly functions gives the Teivaliol any superiority" ; nor it seemed clear to me that the right did inspire the Teivaliol themselves with any feeling of superiority. Indeed, it was distinctly the other way. The Tartharol always boasted that they were the superior people and that the Teivaliol were their servants and the Teivaliol always seemed to me to acquiesce,

2. Dravidian Element in Indian Culture (Ernest Benn. 1914), pp. 54-55.
3. The *Kaltmokh* or *Kavelol* must be chosen from the Teivaliol or to the *Meigars* clan of the Tartharol. The *palol* is a far more sacred person than his assistants.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

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though unwillingly. Whenever I asked a Tarthar man why he regarded his division as superior, he always answered, "we have the *ti* and we appoint Teivaliol to act as our servants."[5]

Thus it will be seen, that the sacredness attaches more to the the buffalo-deities than to its priests, and there is no hereditary or organised priesthood among the Todas as there is among the Hindus. Nor is it known when this institution of the dairy-man priest was evolved or when the Todas came to their present habitat. In fact the racial origin of the Todas is still shrouded in mystery. Their remarkable physical appearance—their light brown skin-colour, well-formed noses, the thick beards of the men and luxuriant hair in both men and women, their well-proportioned limbs, robust constitution and graceful bearing,—is so different from their Dravidian neighbours that their origin has been variously attributed by different previous writers to the Scythians, Druids, Romans, Jews, or Indo-Aryans. Dr. Rivers is inclined to think that the Todas came from Malabar towards the beginning of Perumal rule and might have been originally either Nambudiris or Nairs in origin, and thus furnish us with an example of a people whose culture has degenerated during a period of isolation. The other possible alternative, according to him, is that the Todas are one of the hill tribes of the Western Ghats who have developed a higher culture than the rest owing to the exceptionally favourable environment in the Nilgiri plateau.[6]

One argument somtimes advanced in support of the supposed pre-Aryan or non-Aryan origin of the Brahmins is that tradition as well as history bear witness to the formation of certain modern sections of Brahmins out of non-Brahmins or even non-Aryans. It is true that the Brahmin class like the other two classes of Kṣatriya and Vaiśya appear to have in the past received accretions from outside. Thus the *Sawalakhi Brahmins*[7] of the United Provinces, and the *Udambar, Talajia* and *Pushkarna* Brahmins of Baroda[8] retain traditions of such origin ; and competent scholars regard such high class Brahmins as the Chitpavans and Nagar Brahmins as having foreign blood in their veins.[9]

The Taulava Brahmins of Coorg are said to have been Dravidian fishermen in origin.[10]

According to some authorities the Nambudiri Brahmins of Malabar in their physical type differ from the ordinary Brahmins and more closely resemble the Todas, and some of their customs do not conform to Aryan practices and ideas but point to Non-Aryan

5. *The Todas* (Macmilan, 1906), p. 448.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 716-7.
7. See Sherring, *Hindu Castes*, p. 32.
8. *Baroda Census Report*, 1931, p. 455, See also p. 477.
9. D. R. Bhandarkar, in *The Indian Antiquary*, for January, 1911.
10. See Rev. H. Macgling, Coorg Memoirs, pp. 24-27, quoted in Gustav Oppert's, "Original Inhabitants of Bhāratavarṣa", p. 165.

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origin. But even if it is proved that some sections of Brahmins are not Aryans in origin, that does not go to show that the Brahmins or even the South Indian Brahmins, as a class, are Dravidian in origin.

We have seen, however, that some of the attitudes and sentiments on which caste ultimately rests and the hierarchical series of functional groups, which is one of the prominent features of the Hindu Caste system, had been developed among the pre-Aryan Dravidians presumably in a much greater measure than among the far more backward Proto-Australoids. We may also reasonably infer that the practice of group exogamy or tribal endogamy, and certain *taboos* on food and drink at the hands of other groups must have been observed by them partly owing to superstitious beliefs inherited from more primitive ancestors and partly through interaction with the more primitive culture of their Proto-Australoid neighbours. But inspite of all this, there appears no evidence to suppose that they had developed that strict hierarchical organisation of hereditary groups on the basis of ceremonial purity and supposed purity of blood with a sacred priestly class at the head laying down caste laws, which are the distinctive features of the Hindu Caste system. And we may, I think, be justified in holding that the Pre-Aryan Dravidian social system did not pass beyond the stage of a class system, though perhaps it might have become more rigid than the class systems of many other civilized communities. This rigidity was probably due to the pride of race which the Mediterranean immigrants who were fairer in colour and comparatively more advanced in culture than the indigenous Proto-Australoids must have developed in India.

(6) Sometime later, it would appear a fresh wave of immigration into Northern India of a more advanced Mediterranean people took place. It is, I think, the descendants of these later Mediterranean immigrants of the north who resisted the progress of the Ṛgvedic Aryans along the river valleys of Northern India and who are frequently mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* as the Asuras. They appear to have brought to Northern India a knowledge of metallurgy and the manufacture and use of implements, weapons, ornaments and household utensils and ceremonial objects made of copper, an improved method of pottery-making and an improved method of agriculture by terracing and irrigating the fields. They also appear to have practised urn-burial and raised megalithic memorials over the bones and ashes of their dead. Being much better equipped in the arts of life than the Proto-Australoids who had till then been probably predominant in continental India, this Mediterranean people would appear to have in time established their supremacy in the land. There are reasons to believe that the Mediterraneans and the Proto-Australoids were both originally matrilineal peoples and in time not a little intermixture of blood between the two races must have taken place in India. The more stubborn sections among the Proto-Australoid tribes woud appear to have moved on to the south of the river valleys as far as the Vindhyas and Kaimur ranges and the Mahadeo hill and the Satpura Hills. Thus the Central Mountain Belt of India still forms the main stronghold

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of the Proto-Australoid tribes. In the valleys of the northern rivers the Asuras would appear to have been supreme until the Indo-Aryans arrived.

Some landmarks of the progress of the Asura colonisation eastward are afforded by occasional finds of copper implements, weapons and ornaments, pottery and other artefacts, and traces of buildings and large tanks locally ascribed by tradition in Chhota Nagpur, at any rate, to the pre-historic 'Asuras'. Thus at Bithur on the Ganges in the Cawnpur District, a remarkable barbed spear head made of copper was found in 1821 ; at a village on the Jumna in the Agra District a copper spearhead and two copper celts and six copper bangles were unearthed by a cultivator when tilling his field. Three of the bangles were linked together, and Dr. T. Oldham has pointed out that they resemble in form the so-called "ring-money" of northern antiquaries. Near Fategarh in the Farukhabad District similarly were found thirteen copper swords and a curiously shaped copper object which looks like a human figure, presumably used as a religious symbol or image. At Buxar in Bihar, some terra-cotta figurines and other objects have been dug out which may probably be the handiwork of the same people. From the Narmada valley also similar finds have been reported by Mr. Karandikar. Near Pachamba in the Hazaribagh District of Chhota Nagpur a cultivator found a number of half-formed copper axes of which four are now in the Indian Museum. Near village Silda in Pargana Jhatibani in the Midnapur District of Bengal, a copper battle-axe was found by some villagers who were digging a pit. Not far from the site is village *Tama-juri* which name may indicate the past existence of copper workings there. At village Gungeria in the Balaghat District of the Central Provinces, two boys tending cattle accidentally lighted upon a hoard of 424 pieces of copper instruments and 102 pieces of silver plates or discs and ornaments. Twenty-two of these copper celts and twelve of the silver objects have been described by Mr. Coggin-Brown and are kept in the Indian Museum.[11]

A large number of copper axe-heads, copper bracelets, copper beads and ornaments of different varieties and of beautiful designs, copper and bronze dishes, cups, and copper and bronze vessels of different shapes and sizes have been unearthed by me from graves and building sites in the Ranchi and Singbhum Districts of Chhota Nagpur locally ascribed to the prehistoric Asuras. Besides these objects, the finds from the Asura sites of Chhota Nagpur include terracotta pottery of different shapes and sizes, some hand-made and some wheel-made, some having incised designs on them...either symbolic or ornamental, fragments of enamelled ottery, small terra-cotta models of birds and animal-heads, stone-bulls, tiny copper figure of a man diriving the plough to which two bullocks are yoked, bronze and copper bells, stone maces, stone corn-crushers, ring-stones, anvils, neolithic or mesolithic axeheads, chisels, hammer-stones, small low stone stools and miniature copper stools presumably used for ceremonial purposes, rock-crystal beads, faience beads, beads of coloured stones some of which are semi-precious such as lapis-lazuli, small

11. J. Coggin Brown, Catalogue of Prehistoric Antiquities in the Indian Museum, (1917), pp. 142-151.

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terracotta cones which have the appearance of phallic symbols.[12] In the ruins of one Asura building I found a quantity of charred rice. Among my finds was one small baked clay image of the mother-goddess about one foot high and a small bronze celt which is the only bronze celt uptil now reported to have been found in India.[13] The foundations of the reputed Asura buildings are made of large burnt bricks 17 inches long and 10 inches wide and 3 inches thick. It is significant that these building sites are called the *Asurgarhs* or *Forts of the Asurs*. At the burial sites, over each grave is laid a large stone-slab (the largest one that I measured was 12′x7½′x6″) lying flat and supported by four small stones at the four corners. By the side of the flat stone over some graves planted vertically is a tall and broad stone slab.

These Asura sites are generally located by the side of hill-streams on extensive elevated grounds commanding a wide view of the country around. In the vicinity of some of these Asura sites may also be found large old tanks locally called "Asur Pokhras" or the 'tanks of the Asurs'.

Such prehistoric ruins of the "Asuras" appear to lie scattered all over Chhota Nagpur ; but for lack of investigation they are lying unexplored. From village Hami in the Palamau District of Chhota Nagpur 22 axe-heads made of copper besides a miniature copper stool for ceremonial use were discovered by a cultivator while ploughing his field. In the Manbhum District number of copper axe-heads, some of them very large were found by the late Dr. Campbell. Copper axe-heads and other implements have also been known to have been accidentally unearthed by cultivators in the District of Bankura in Bengal.

In the furthest east or north-east, in Assam, there are some ancient ruins which local tradition attributes to the Asuras ; but these do not appear to have been explored. I saw one such ancient building site not far from the town of Gauhati. It contained large bricks of about the same size as those in the Asura sites of Ranchi. From Sir Edward Gait's *History of Assam*,[14] we learn that there are traditions in Assam of the former rule of 'Asuras' and among the former 'Asura' kings of Assam, Mahirang Danab and his successors Hatak Asur, Sambar Asur, Ratna Asur, Narak Asur are named ; and there is also a hill named Narak Asur near Gauhati.

Most of these prehistoric antiquities of this period are chance finds, and it may be fairly expected that systematic exploration would bring to light a very much larger quantum of evidence regarding the culture attained by this second division of the Mediterranean colonisers of India. Terrace cultivation and the use of metals appear to have been the most important contributions of these people to the material culture of the aboriginal inhabitants of India. The Austric speech of the Munda tribes would appear to have been

12. This and most other artefacts are now in the Patna Museum.
13. *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*. Vol. I (1915). pp. 229-353 : Vol. VI (1920), pp. 393-423. Most of these objects may be seen in the Patna Museum.
14. 2nd Edition (1926), pp. 12-13.

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considerably moulded and modified by contact with the language of this Mediterranean race; and some of the important culture-elements, that distinguish the Munda or 'Kolarian' culture from the culture of the Dravidian-speaking pre-Dravidian neighbours of the Mundas such as the Oraons, the Sauria Paharias, the Khonds and the Gonds, would appear to have been developed through culture-contact with the 'Asur' race and very probably also through a certain amount of racial intermixture.

As the first division of Mediterranean colonisers introduced permanent villages into India, this second or 'Asura' division of the Mediterranean race might perhaps have developed something approaching towns, centering around the 'forts' or 'garhs' as they are called, of the Asura Chiefs. These 'Asur-garhs' consisted of one or two fairly large brick buildings, or at any rate structures with foundations of bricks, which were obviously occupied by the Chiefs and the rest of the population of the settlement must have dwelt in houses made of perishable materials. In the areas where the ruins of these 'garhs' or 'forts' are found, the *garhs* are found at distances of three or four to seven or eight miles from one another. The conjecture may not perhaps be unreasonable that each 'garh' or fort was the centre of civic life; and that these 'Asuras' had not developed a wider state-organisation than something like the city state. A tradition among the Mundas of Chhota Nagpur speaks of the male-folk of the Asuras having been routed by the God of the Mundas through a trick, and the spirits of the female-folk of the Asuras having become included among the spirits whom the Mundas have to propitiate by sacrifices and offerings. If a section of the Mediterranean Asuras might have been routed or absorbed in the hilly regions of Chhota Nagpur, the bulk of the Asuras would appear to have been dominant in the river-valleys of Northern India when the Aryans arrived there.

Although the cultural remains of the Mediterranean 'Asuras' in other parts of Northern India have not been properly explored, a section of them who had settled down in the valley of the Indus have been more fortunate both in respect of modern exploration of their ancient sites, and, what is more, in the tremendous advance they had made over the contemporaneous culture of other branches of the Mediterranean race in India and elsewhere, and probably over all other contemporaneous races and peoples in the then world.

Most favourably situated is the Indus Valley which, as Sir John Marshall says, was the meeting ground of Proto-Australoids from the Indian sub-continent, of Mediterraneans from along the southern shores of Asia, and of Alpines and Mongolo-Alpines whose habitat was in the mountain zones respectively of western and eastern Asia, their civilization far outstripped in achievement and complexity that of their 'Asura' branch who extended across Northern India from the Punjab to as far east as Assam, and who came in contact only with the ruder Proto-Australoid and perhaps Proto-Dravidian cultures and peoples.

However, that may be, although the Indus Valley civilization had its cultured classes and merchants and artisans, its nobles and commoners, and although Sir John Marshall

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opines that "the religion of the Indus people was the lineal progenitor of Hinduism", it has not been suggested by any authority that the special features that distinguish the Hindu Caste system from the class-system of other countries was evolved at Mohenjo-daro or Harappa. Indeed no inference of the existence of such a system can be made from the materials that have been hitherto unearthed. The Indus Valley people must have had a class of rulers and administrators, a class of merchants, and a class of artisans, but there is nothing to show that they had an organised class of priests at the head of the other classes. It is only when a people develops an elaborate and intricate religious ritual that a class of experts in ritualism evolves. But there is nothing to show that the Asuras either of Northern India or the Indus Valley had developed such a complex ritualism, or that their class division had crystallized into absolutely endogamous castes.

In support of my suggestion that the 'Asuras' of Chhota Nagpur tradition belonged to the same Mediterranean race that formed the main element of the population responsible for the chalcolithic culture of the Indus Valley. I may mention that an earlier stage of most of the nine features of the Indus culture which Sir John Marshall mentions as resembling the Second Pre-Dravidian culture of Elam and Mesopotamia and the proto-historic culture of Sumer, are represented, though on an humble and miniature scale, in the "Asura" culture of mesolithic times in Chhota Nagpur. Thus, in the 'Asura' culture in Chhota Nagpur, we find an earlier stage of (I) an organization of society in cities ; (2) the continued but sparing use of stones side by side with copper and bronze for the manufacture of weapons, tools, and vessels; (3) the invention of the potter's wheel and the production with its help of improved kinds of pottery ; (4) the invention of wheeled vehicles (as indicated by something like a copper toy-cart recovered at Hami in the Palamau District and now placed in the Patna Museum); (5) the construction of buildings with kiln burnt and sun dried bricks ; (6) the use of maces of stone ; (7) the fashioning of ornaments out of faience and shell and stones.[15]

Of the features mentioned by Sir John Marshall, it is principally the picture-signs for writing and artefacts of gold and silver that have not been found in the few Chhota Nagpur 'Asura' sites that have been so far partially explored, nor did art reach the high level to which it had attained in the Valley of the Indus. As for class divisions among the Asuras of Chhota Nagpur, it is reasonable to infer that they had, at any rate, evolved a division of the people into at least two classes, the class of chiefs and nobles and the common folk, and the common folk included agriculturists as well as artisans. There were also the indigenous Proto-Australoids. Although the Proto-Australoid aboriginal tribes of India must have received the first impetus to civilization from this 'Asur branch of the Mediterranean race', caste was not among the contributions that the Asuras made

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15. *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, vol. I., p. 102.
(Only beads of these materials and only *cowrie*-shells have been found in Chhota Nagpur 'Asura' sites).

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to India. As we have seen, the Munda of 'Kolarian' tribes are to this day strangers to the caste-system.

The Indus Valley civilization, according to Marshall, was from the beginning connected with Mesopotamia, and lasted approximately five centuries, from 3,250 B.C. to 2,750 B.C.

7. The next immigration into India appears to have been that of a broad-headed Eurasiatic Alpine race either from the Pamirs or from the Iranian plateau, towards or after the end of the Mohenjo-daro period. One branch of this race appears to have spread southwards along the west coast as far down as Coorg, as being perhaps the direction of least resistance. These were the ancestors of the Marhattas, the Prabhus, the Kunbis and a number of other broad-headed communities of Western India.

Another branch of this race appears to have been the ancestors of the Gujaratis on the West and the Bengalis on the east. Whether the two branches of the Alpine immigrants to India came together or one after the other it is difficult to conjecture. But it appears very probable that at any rate the ancestors of the Bengalis and the Gujaratis had lived together in North-Western India for some time before they migrated to their present respective habitats. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar[16] has pointed out some significant resemblance between the modern Bengalis and the Gujaratis. The migration of the ancestors of the Marhattas and others southwards from the Punjab and those of the Gujaratis south-wards to Gujarat and of the Bengalis east-wards by way of Central India and Bihar to Bengal might be due either to some internal movements of peoples or to the pressure of the incoming Indo-Aryans.[17] There do not appear to be any reasons to suppose that this Alpine race knew any rigid caste-divisions or had any particular tendency towards the formation of the complex caste-system as we now know it, though it is likely that they were divided into two or more broad classes.

8. Before passing on to the Indo-Aryan immigration into India I should not omit a passing reference to the Mongoloid element which occurs on the northern and eastern frontiers where India merges into the great Mongolian region. Neither the slightly Mongoloid Kanet of Lahoul and Gurkha of Nepal nor the most distinctly Mongoloid Limbu of Nepal nor the Mongoloid Rong-pa or Lepcha of Nepal and Sikkim show any predilection for caste. The slightly Mongoloid Tharu of the Tarai District of Motihari in North Bihar is still in the animistic stage with a slight veneer of Hinduism and is in course of formation into a tribal caste.

In Assam an originally long-headed Proto-Australoid, with perhaps some slight Proto-Negroid, substratum has been over-laid and submerged by aggressive broad-headed

16. *Indian Antiquary*, for 1911, pp. 7-37. Thus both the Nāgar Brahmins of Gujarat and the Kāyasthas of Bengal have such family names as Ghose, Mitra, Datta, Nag, Pal etc.
17. Brachycephalic elements have been found throughout the Malwa plateau as far as Rewa, and again from Bihar eastwards there is a gradual increase of a brachycephalic element reaching its maximum intensity in Bengal. Dr. B. S. Guha. *The Racial Origins of the Bengali*, in the Sir P. C. Ray Commemoration Volume. pp. 174-78.

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Indo-Chinese Mongolian elements—Tibeto-Burman, Tai or Shan, as well as a Nesiot or Indonesian and a Paroean or Southern Mongoloid element ; and finaly, an Indo-Aryan element has also contributed its share to the formation of the composite Assamese people. The Mongolian race-movement from the north which commenced early, in successive waves of immigration into Assam, does not appear to have yet ended. The Tibeto-Burman Shans who finally conquered Assam in the 13th century and in 1228 A.D. assumed the name of 'Ahom' and called the country 'Assam' after themselves. The Mongoloid Shingpho or Chingpo (Kachin of Burma) arrived from the Upper waters of the Irrawady about the year 1793. It is the Indo-Aryan immigrants who introduced the Hindu idea of caste into Assam, but it is still not as rigid as in most other provinces of India.

We read in Appendix C of the *Assam Census Report*, prepared by Prof. K. M. Gupta, Ph. D. (London), 1931 : "Castes and sub-castes are still in the process of formation.....In early times (between *circa* 500 A.D. and 1100 A.D.) the distinction between the Brahmins, Vaidyas and Kāyasthas was not acute and was based more or less upon functional differences. The ranks of the Vaidyas and Kāyasthas, on account of their respectability, were swelled by accretion from the lower ranks through the adoption of certain common *padavis* such as Dutta, Dāsa, and Sena. In earlier times, I think, the humbler ranks went by the general name of 'Dāsa', i. e., of the 'Dāsa-kula' which stood in contrast to the Deva-kulas or Devas or the twice-born formed by the above-named three castes. Most of the Varṇa-Brāhmaṇas are apparently indigenous. There is no evidence to show that they migrated here from some other place." Thus there appears no valid reason to suppose that the Mongolian race had any contribution to make to the Hindu caste system.

(9) At last by about the second millenium before Christ, if not earlier, the Ṛgvedic Aryans appeared in the valleys of the Indus and its tributaries and, later, in the valleys of the Ganges and the Jumna. They found the country teeming with a heterogeneous population composed of countless tribes and clans and classes of various degrees of racial intermixture speaking different languages and dialects, worshipping different gods, pursuing different occupations, following different customs and habits of life, and not unoften warring against one another. After various successes and reverses, the Aryans gradually succeeded in subjugating and conciliating some of the tribes, routing some, pushing forward others before them further to the east and driving some others to the south of the river valleys.

As for the then social divisions among these new immigrants we find frequent reference in the earliest Vedic literature to three classes or orders (*Varṇa*) of Indo-Aryan society which had their parallels in similar classes in ancient Iran or Persia as mentioned in the Avesta. Thus, to mention only a few out of numerous references, in the very first *Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, we find mention of a Brahman of Soma in Chap. IV, *Sūkta* 17, of a Vipra (i. e. Brāhmaṇa) named Bharadvāja in Chap. 16, *Sūkta* 113, 112, of a Brahman

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in Chap. VI, *Sūkta* 24 ; of a *Kṣattra* in Chap. VIII, *Sūkta* 40, and again in Chap. VI, *Sūkta*, 25 ; and of *Viśa* (*Vaiśyas*) in Chap. 16, *Sūkta* 112. In Chap. VI, *Sūkta* 25 Varuṇa is said to be vested with all the glories of a *Kṣattra*.

Such references to the three *Varṇas* or classes also occur in other *Maṇḍalas* of the *Ṛgveda*.

But the Vaiśyas and Śūdras are nowhere named in the *Ṛgveda* as distinct orders of Indo-Aryan society except in the famous *Puruṣasūkta* (90th hymn of the tenth *Maṇḍala*) which is regarded by competent Vedic scholars to be not as old as the other portions of the *Ṛgveda* though composed in the same period. It is only in this hymn that the name Śūdra occurs in the *Ṛgveda*.

One may very well imagine that the Indo-Aryans, the symbols of whose God were the universal phenomena of Nature, and whose outlook on the world was correspondingly broad, were shocked by the spirit of separatism that they found rampant among the pre-Aryan peoples of the land of their adoption. Accordingly, the need for co-ordinating the heterogeneous population into one organic whole must have been vaguely felt by the general mind of the Indo-Aryan community, when they had comparative respite from the incessant hostilities they had encountered in the beginning. This idea, which might have for sometime been floating vaguely in the social atmosphere of Indo-Aryan India, first took a definite shape in the mind of the gifted Ṛṣi or *seer* Nārāyaṇa by name who composed the *Puruṣasūkta*, breathed life into the idea and expressed it in vivid language in one of the grandest hymns of the *Ṛgveda*.

I do not know of any sublimer conception in literature than that of the *Puruṣasūkta* which delineates *Puruṣa*—the Lord of Creation—as sacrificing Himself to create or, in other words, to manifest Himself as the Universe, His 'head' representing the Brāhmaṇa class or the intellectual, moral and spiritual energies and the directive forces of humanity ; His 'arms' representing the Kṣattriya class or the ruling, protecting and military forces of humanity ; His 'thighs' representing the wealth-producing energies of man, typified by the Vaiśya class who are the nourishers of the physical bodies of men, and His 'feet' producing the Śūdra class meant to typify the spirit of service to mankind and the divinity of manual labour.

When one reads this hymn one cannot help lamenting that its sublime conception of humanity with its interrelated natural classes or Varṇas forming an organic unity in God— as interdependent parts of the body of the Divine Being Himself—could not be ultimately realised in the social organization that actually developed in Hindu India.

Whatever the interpretation of this particular verse of the *Puruṣasūkta* may be, all authorities agree in holding that the three social orders of Priests, Warriors or Nobels, and the Commonalty were known when the *Ṛgveda* was composed, but the names Kṣattriya and Vaiśya had not yet been definitely fixed. It is recorded that Viśvāmitra, Ajāmīḍha and Purāmīḍha who composed portions of the *Ṛgveda* and who had been originally Kṣattriyas were admitted to Brahminical rank. Similarly, Yāska in his Nirukta has

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recorded that of the two brothers Śantanu and Devāpi one became a King (Kṣattriya) and the other a priest or Purohita (Brahmin).[18]

But with increasing miscegenation of the Aryans with the indigenous population and with increasing complexity of society, a consideration of purity of blood gradually came to assume some importance.

By the time of the *Yajurveda* which marks the further expansion of the Aryans and their culture from the Punjab to the *Kuru-Pāñcāla* country in the great central plains of Northern India, the priesthood and nobility appear to have become more or less hereditary. Restrictions to inter-marriage and inter-dining do not, however, appear to have been yet introduced.

In the Brāhmaṇa period (*circa* 800 to 600 B.C.) which followed and in which the Aryans had advanced further to the east and south-east, a tendency towards the formation of castes was first in evidence. Yet this early period of the social history of Hindu India may be called the *Varṇa* or class period, as distinguished from the later *Jāti* or hereditary caste period. Prof. Berriedale Keith writes : "There came into existence a new factor, the introduction of divisions among the ordinary freemen the Vaiśyas, and the development of a large complicated system of Caste which converts the simple distinction of Vaiśya and Śūdra into an ever-increasing number of endogamous hereditary groups practising one occupation or at least restricted to a small number of occupations. This result was certainly far from being reached in the period of the Brāhmaṇa, but the tendency of social and racial distinctions to harden into castes is already apparent.....In the Brāhmaṇas, while we have no reason to doubt that the priesthood and nobility were hereditary, these castes seem to have been free to intermarry with the lower castes including the Śūdra, as the cases of Vatsa and Kavaṣa...indicate."[19]

But I venture to think that Prof. Keith is not quite accurate when he says that divisions were now introduced among the Vaiśyas. It would, I think, be more accurate to say that the ideal of unification of the different sections that composed the *viś* or *Vaiśya* class, could not be realised.

Besides a regard for purity of blood, differences in occupation and respective respectability attaching to different arts and crafts—also hindered the realization of the Vedic ideal of one undivided commonalty of the *Viś* or *Vaiśya Varṇa*. With the progress of civilization and the expansion of the Aryans all over India, new arts and crafts began to multiply and new accretions were made to the Vaiśya class and so section after section of artisans, traders, industrialists and others came to be added to the Vaiśya class, and some, who though Aryans in origin, neglected the sacraments prescribed for the 'twice-born', or whose habits were too 'impure' or uncleanly to justify their inclusion in the Vaiśya class, remained as distinct sections of the Śūdra class.

In the subsequent *Sūtra* period (*circa* 600 B.C. to 200 B.C.) we find the Śūdras men-

18. *The Origin and Development of Castes*, by the Rev. K. M. Banerjee, LL. D., (1878).
19. The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I. p. 125-126.

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tioned as part of the Hindu social structure, 'yet', as prof. Hopkins points out, "the Śūdras were not Pariahs but members of the household, who took part in some of the domestic rites."[20]

The original ideal of purity of the mind and the soul came at this period, to be supplemented and much later, to be overshadowed by the idea of external and ceremonial purity. The further elaboration of the Brahmanic religious ritual necessitated a growing attention to ceremonial purity, and as a reaction against the uncleanly habits of the aboriginal people who were by then partially absorbed into the Brahmanic fold, and miscegenation with whom produced a large population of semi-aboriginals, who now form the bulk of the lower classes among the Hindus, the idea of purity in food and habits began to be abnormally developed. As Hopkins observes, "The test of *caste* is not marriage alone but defilement by eating and touching what is unclean."

"In this regard the Sūtras show only the beginning of that formal theory of defilement which results in a pure man of the upper castes being defiled by the shadow of an impure man, and in the taboo of all contact with the impure. According to Gautama (*Dharma Sūtra* ; XVII, I f.), a Brahmin may eat food given by any of the 'reborn' who are worthy members of the caste, and if in need of food to support life he may take food and other things even from a Śūdra."[21]

As for marriage restrictions in the *Sūtra* period, the same writer tells us, that "Even in the all important matter of marriage. caste is not so important as family. The only test, when one seeks a wife, according to *Śāṅkhāyana*, is that of the family. They ask the girl in marriage, reciting the clan-names...Indeed the marriage rules permitted the marriage of a Śūdra woman, though as the last of four wives, with a member of the highest caste, whose offspring, of course, being 'mixed' or impure, is not a member of the Aryan 'reborn', but neverthelass is recognised legally."[22]

As for the occupational taboo, "Baudhāyana admits the doctrine that a priest who cannot support himself by the usual occupations of a Brāhmin may take up arms and follow the profession of a warrior."[23] "At the time of the Sūtras," as Prof. Hopkins points out, "there were many nominal members of the priestly and royal orders, who lived as farmers and traders."[24]

It may be noted that from the 6th century before Christ down to the beginning of the Christian era, the Hindus came into close contact with foreign people—Persians, Syrians, Bactrians, Parthians, Greeks or Yavanas who from time to time made incursions into India and, for longer or shorter terms, each succeeded in holding parts of North-Western India. Although these foreign invasions did not produce any lasting effects on Indian society, yet some foreign elements must have in this way entered into the composition of the Hindu people of those parts. More important was the domination of India by the Kushans during the opening centuries of the Christian era. The most famous

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20. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 234-35.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 241
24. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

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Kushan king of India, Kaṇiṣka, who became a Buddhist and had his capital at Puṣpapura or Peshawar extended his empire up to Benares on the east and Sind in the south. Some Scythians accepted Hinduism and others Buddhism and mingled their blood more freely with Indians. The Rajputs are by some authorities regarded as Scythians in origin. During the Maurya and Kushan periods, trade-relations were maintained by India with Greece and Egypt through Asia Minor, and Buddhist missionaries from India used to visit China and Tibet and pilgrims from those countries would come to visit India. Dravidian India, too, was brought into closer contact with Northern India.

In the *Manusaṃhitā* (X., 43, 44) which took its present shape during this period, we are told that the Greeks (*Yavana*), Scythians (*Śaka*), Persians (*Pārada*), Chinese (*Chīna*), and Cambodians (*Kāmboja*), like the Dravidians (*Drāviḍa*), Oriyās (*Oḍra*), etc, were Kṣattriyas in origin, but became *Śūdras* for neglect of the sacraments and duties proper for Kṣattriyas.

The Buddhist *Jātākas* reveal that the elasticity in the matter of occupation, commensality and intermarriage between the different classes continued as before. In the Mṛcchakaṭika we find the Brahmin hero of the drama engaged in the occupation of a Vaiśya.

In the *Dharma-Śastras*, or Law-books, as Prof. Hopkins points out—"The people are divided into general orders representing the military, priestly and agricultural or mercantile classes, still mingling freely with each other, intermarrying, but with due regard for the respect paid to the higher orders, and utterly devoid of the 'caste' rules later adopted in respect of food and marriage."[25]

Historic interest in the *Purāṇas* centres in Magadha (Modern South Bihār) which eventually established an empire comprising almost the whole of India. The Śiśunāga and Nanda dynasties of Magadha might, as Prof. Rapson thinks, "have been descendants of mountain-chieftains who had own the kingdom of Magadha by conquest."[26] Although this supposition may perhaps be doubted, we have it on the authority of the *Purāṇas* that the last of the Śiśunāga kings, though expressly called Kṣattriya, married a Śūdra woman, and their issue Mahāpadma Nanda and eight sons formed a Śūdra dynasty. The Maurya emperors who followed were also of Śudra extraction. As Dr. F. W. Thomas writes, "Henceforth the spectacle of the low-born man in power was never a rarity ; and soon it was the foreigner."[27] At this time, however, caste was in the making.

At the time of the Code of Manu the intermixture of the classes and the incorporation of certain foreign groups had already produced a considerable number of intermediate and mixed classes which approximated to the modern division of the population into castes. But the ideal of the four *Varṇas* comprising all humanity was the accepted social creed. It was Manu (*circa* 400 A.D.) who for the first time carefully defined the respective features and duties of the four original *Varṇas* or classes divinely ordained or, in other words, the four primary psychological types of men.

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25. *Ibid.*, p. 294. 26. *Ibid.*, p. 314. 27. *Ibid.*, p. 480.

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Manu says,

"janmanā jāyate śūdraḥ saṃskārāddvija ucyate,
śūdreṇa hi samastāvad yāvadvede na jāyate."

"Every man is born a Śūdra. Through *saṃskāra* (*lit*, purification) he becomes a *Dvija* or twice-born. Until birth in the *Veda* (*lit.*, knowledge) everyone remains a Śūdra."

As regards the duties of the four *varṇas*, Manu says,

"brāhmaṇasya tapo jñānaṃ tapaḥ kṣattrasya rakṣaṇam
vaiśyasya tu tapo vārtā tapaḥ śūdrasya sevanam."

"The *tapas* of the Brāhmaṇa is (acquisition of) knowledge ; the *tapas* of the Kṣattriya is protection (of the weak) ; the *tapas* of the Vaiśya is the pursuit of trade and agriculture ; the *tapas* of the Śūdra is service (of others)."

In some verses (e.g. IX. 335 ; X. 42) Manu declares that through the influence of *tapas* (persevering and austere endeavour) on the "seed" (innate nature of an individual) persons born into one caste may rise to a higher caste, and on the other hand, by selfishness and self-indulgence a man of a higher caste may degenerate into a lower caste ; and that through purity in outer as well as inner life, company and service of higher castes, freedom from pride, and gentleness of speech, a Śūdra may attain to the rank of the twice-born caste with whom he lives and moves.

"tapobījaprabhāvaistu te gacchanti yuge yuge.
utkarṣaṃ cāpkarṣaṃ ca manuṣyeṣviha janmataḥ (X. 42)
śucirutkṛṣṭaśūśrūṣurmṛduvāganahaṅkṛtaḥ.
brāhmaṇādyāśrayo nityamutkṛṣṭaṃ jātimaśnute". (IX. 335)

In the last verse we find the word *'jāti'* actually employed for *Varṇa*. A careful perusal of the *Manusaṃhitā* will convince the unprejudiced reader that its author took full account of existing conditions of race—mixtures which had been going on from the beginning of the Aryan colonisation of India.

The ancient Hindu sages, in the organization of society on an ideal basis for the furtherance of spiritual progress, took a practical view of the realities of the situation. They accepted all forms of marriage in vogue among the different communities in India as valid and arranged them in a graduated scale of merit; they recognized the food-taboos and touch-taboos of the lower culture as they found they were too deep-rooted to eradicate, and so they sought to give them a new orientation by substituting the idea of purity and cleanliness for the notion of *mana* ; they recognized the existence of the Non-Aryan's taboos, based on the fear of witchcraft and magic, of strangers, and particularly of women with regard to entry to their sacred places, and gave such taboos a new orientation by tabooing temple entry by a person with an unclean body or with habitually uncleanly habits ; they recognized all forms of social groups then in existence and gave to each its proper place in the four-fold division of society graded on the basis of spiritual growth ; they recognised all forms of religious worship as striving after the same goal, and only sought to

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improve or elevate the crude notions of the earlier inhabitants by giving them a higher spiritual orientation.

The rules laid down in the *Manusaṃhitā* to regulate mixed marriages between different castes show that, though not approved and not as frequent as before, such unions were still practised and recognised as legal marriage.

As for interdining there does not appear to have been any restrictions as between the three twice-born classes or castes in those days. In the Brahmacaryāśrama period of the Manu's scheme of life for the twice-born, students of all the three castes lived together, begged together and ate together. As for the three twice-born castes eating at the hands of the once-born *Śūdra*, Manu in verse 253 of Chapter IV lays down the rule that "One's own ploughman, an old friend of the family, one's own cowherd, one's own servant, one's own barber, and whosoever else may come for refuge and offer service – at the hands of such *Śūdras* cooked food may be taken (by a twice-born person)."

"ārdhikaḥ kulamitraṃ ca gopālo dāsanāpitau.
ete śūdreṣu bhojyānnā yaścātmānaṃ nivedayet."

And in verses 224 and 225 of Chapter IV, Manu lays down as an injunction from God Himself that the gift of cooked food from a *Śūdra* who has a pure and generous heart is itself pure and acceptable to a Brahmin versed in the Vedas, but not the gift of food even from a Brahmin, who though versed in the Vedas is small of heart as his niggardly spirit makes the food impure.

"śrotriyasya kadaryasya vadānyasya ca vārdhuṣeḥ.
mīmāṃsitvobhayaṃ devāḥ samamannamakalpayan.
tān prajāpatirāhetya mā kṛdhvain viṣamain samam.
śraddhāpūtaṃ vadānyasya hatamaśraddhayetarat."

As regards the goal of Brahmin's life, Manu again says :—

"tapo vidyā ca viprasya niḥśreyasakaraṃ param.
tapasā kilviṣaṃ hanti vidyayā'mṛtamaśnute.
tapomūlamidaṃ sarvaṃ daivamānuṣakaṃ sukham,
tapomadhyaṃ budhaiḥ proktaṃ tapo'ntaṃ vedadarśibhiḥ."

"Self denial and knowledge are the only means to the goal (of life) for the Brāhmana. Through self-denial he destroys the impurities of his (mind and body) which obstruct the higher vision. Through wisdom and knowledge he attains the immortal Brahma."

Here we see that the original Hindu idea of 'purity' and 'impurity' connected with food, drink and touch related essentially to purity of the soul ; what was desirable was purity of heart, mental good-will. Physical cleanliness helped inner purity and was therefore enjoined upon. What was to be eschewed was all impurity of soul, uncleanliness and other impure association. Outward cleanliness was regarded as conducive to a clean heart and was accordingly commended. Purity in body and soul was held in such high estimation that everything pure was regarded as of good omen and anything impure as of bad omen. Whatever was pure possessed the quality of *sattva*, and whatever was impure possessed the quality of *tamas*. Thus it follows that the idea of the *guṇas* is based

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on the idea of purity. And the ultimate basis of the Hindu class-hierarchy and subsequently of caste-hierarchy—both founded on the *guṇas*, is therefore purity of the soul. This is the distinguishing mark of the Hindu class-system as compared with that of the class-system of other countries of the world.

Thus the ideal of the Varṇa-system, based on the *guṇas* or spiritual tendencies is a graduated scheme or discipline for the perfection of human nature by the evolution of the highest aspect of man connoted by *Sattvaguṇa*. The four Varṇas of Manu corresponding to the intellectual, kingly, or administrative and military, commercial and industrial classes, and unskilled labourers are all conceived of as forming one organic whole, branches of one and the same tree of humanity. Separatist tendencies are the antithesis of such a conception. Hindu sociologists divided mankind into four psychological types in preference to the racial types of modern ethnology. In Manu's time and indeed until Muhammadan domination in India, the Varṇas or classes do not appear to have degenerated into absolutely rigid and closed groups of castes. To discard Manu's view "as an artificial systematisation composed centnries after the origin which it professes to explain" does not appear to me to be just. It is, no doubt, true, the class divisions and rules laid down by him are based on an ideal scheme, and that the ideal has not been fully realised.

But ideals have always been the real dynamic factors in human culture. The germ of a new idea floats for sometime in a nebulous state in the social atmosphere before some great mind grasps it, and gives it a form and a name and proclaims it. And the idea moulds the age.

The idea of a four-fold division of mankind, according to their respective innate spiritual tendencies, must have originated by a similar process And it has, as we know, to a large extent moulded Hindu society. The history of *Varṇa* and of caste is the interaction between the conflicting social ideals of the Aryan and the pre-Aryan communities, the real social history of India.

Manu's laws relating to Varṇas and Varṇāśrama have always been regarded by Hindu society in the past and by orthodox Hindu society uptil now as the last word on the subject. And as Dr. Hutton himself says, "No legislator could ever enforce a Caste system for which usage, belief and custom were not already prepared to the extent of having already developed all the necessary ingredients."[28]

The *Manusaṃhitā* appears to comprise an exhaustive set of Varṇa ordinances and principles based on the sentiments, ideas and usages prevalent at the time and presumably recognized and approved by the general conscience of the fellow-countrymen of the author of the Code. The Supreme authority of Manu's Law Code or *Dharma-Śāstra* as it is called, has always been acknowledged throughout India. And this could not have happened unless it was broad-based on the common conscience of the people.

True, as a result of various historical causes, and reactions of racial and cultural contacts, caste-customs as depicted in Manu's Code have altered and degenerated in

28. *Census Report of India*, 1931, Part I, p. 438 foot-note.

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various details, but the root-principle is still recognized by most Hindus, though no longer followed in practice by many.

That principle, as I have said, is that all human beings fall into one or other of the four main psychological types or *Varṇas* distinguished by the proportion of the three *guṇas* or spiritual tendencies that enter into the spiritual constitution of each human individual ; that ordinarily by virtue of heredity and social environment, discipline and sacraments these spiritual tendencies become family tendencies, and a son becomes, or at any rate for social expediency has to be recognised, as of the same *Varṇa* as his father ; but in exceptional cases, even in his present life, a person may by merit acquire a higher caste than his fathers, and in some cases a person or a family may also by merit lose their caste or descend to a lower caste. What differentiates the *guṇas* is essentially the degree of purity of the mind and soul which each *guṇa* indicates. Further, in order to maintain purity of soul, it is essential to have a pure body, to the formation of which pure descent, pure food and pure associations are invaluable aids.

The Sanskrit word Saṃskāra means purification. The different sacraments called 'Saṃskāras' which a Hindu has to undergo at different stages of his life are in essence rites of purification or, sacralisation, or if one may say so, 'spiritualization', designed to help, as the English poet Milton would say, "to turn the body to the soul's essence", or to use another poetical expression, "to raise the spirit from the clay" by stages. Communities of foreigners and others, who do not observe the sacraments, though they belong, by their temperament or innate tendencies, to one or other of the four *Varṇas* or psychological types of 'Brāhmaṇa', 'Kṣattriya', 'Vaiśya', and 'Śūdra', must according to Manu, remain outside the pale of castes and have to be called '*Mlecchas*'.

Although Manu lays down elaborate rules as to how to maintain purity of body and mind, the general rule as laid down by him is this :

"adbhirgātrāṇi śuddhyanti manaḥ satyena śuddhyati.
vidyātapobhyāṃ bhūtātmā buddhirjñānena śuddhyati."

"The body is purified by water, the mind by truth, the soul by knowledge and austerity, the reason by wisdom". As to the rules regarding purity of food and drink the restrictions, he lays down are mostly based on hygienic principles and a few on sentimental considerations or supposed properties of certain articles of food or drink that are believed to be helpful or obstructive to the nourishment of certain *guṇas*.

The hierarchical gradation of castes, the rules regarding intermarriage and interdining, and the idea of pollution by touch, which are now the the most prominent features of caste are primarily based on this principle of *śaucam* or purity. The consideration of occupation in grading castes has also for its ultimate basis this principle of purity. For, different occupations have different associations and their respective influence on the purity of the body and of the mind is believed to vary correspondingly.

The Caste Code of Manu is not, as I have attempted to show, a mere artificial

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schematization having no foundation in facts, nor is the Ṛgvedic idea of a four-fold division of humanity a mere figment of the brain of a speculative Brahmin, as Risley fancied. The classification of the population into three, four or more classes according to occupation is based on human psychology and has been known to exist in different lands in ancient and modern times, and it is not surprising that the Vedic Indians should have recognised similar classes. And Risley's suggestion that it "bears no relation to the actual facts of life" and may be "nothing more than a borrowed and modified version of the division of society into four classes...priests, warriors, cultivators and artisans...which appears in the sacerdotal literature of ancient Persia," hardly merits any comment. More correct is the statement of Dr. Eggeling who says that the social grades of the royal or military and the priestly classes and below them the *viś* or bulk of the Aryan community, appear "to have been in existence even before the separation of the two Asiatic branches of the Indo-Germanic race, the Aryans of India aud Iran." He adds, "At the time of the hymns, and even during the common Indo-Persian period the sacrificial ceremony had already become sufficiently complicated to call for the creation of a certain number of distinct priestly offices with special duties attached to them." While this shows clearly that the position and occupation of the priest were those of a profession, the fact that the terms *brāhmaṇa* and *brahmaputra* both denoting the son of a Brahmin "are used in certain hymns as synonyms of *Brahman*, seems to justify the assumption that the profession had already, to a certain degree, become hereditary when these hymns were composed."

The Ṛgvedic period of India was a period of guerilla hostilities between the new-comers and the older inhabitants. The Vedic ideal of one organic human society with the intellectual section guiding the other sections, and all functioning in general harmony was not affected by the separatist ideal of the congeries of Non-Aryan communities who had then their stronghold in the valleys of the Jumna and the Ganges and did not yet enter into social relations with the Aryans.

The Vedic period was a period of clash of arms and not clash of ideals and cultures. It was when the new-comers with the multiplication of their number moved on further east and settled down on the valleys of the Madhyadeśa or the Midland country and established more friendly relations with the former inhabitants of the land entered into social and, in many cases, connubial relations with them that a clash of ideals began. Again, later, there was a similar clash of ideals and cultures when some sections of the Aryans migrated accross the Vindhyas to the south and greater intermixture of races began. This is why it is in these two areas that the present caste-system which is the out-come of this interaction between two dissimilar cultures has its stronghold. Interaction between these different ideals and intermixture of different racial groups produced a modification of the Aryan ideal of purity which distinguishes the class-divisions of India from those of other countries. The original ideal of purity, primarily of the soul and mind, and secondarily, of the body as an aid to inner purity which determined the social precedence of the four *Varṇas*-came to be alloyed and perverted in some respects through interaction with the Pre-Aryan idea of '*mana*' or a superphysical magnetism inherent in

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most men and other creatures and objects. In fact, as the racial history of India is the history of the different degrees of inter-mixture of the Pre-Aryan and Aryan populations, so too the social history of India is the history of the interaction between the pre-Aryan with Aryan social ideals, and particularly the pre-Aryan social ideal of separatism and social democracy with the Aryan social ideal of one universal humanity organized in a social hierarchy graded in the order of spiritual growth.

Restrictions as to inter-marriage and inter-dining are not special features of the Caste system as it ultimately took shape in India. These have been a common feature of the social class-divisions of other communities too.

Although the great development of ritualism even in Vedic times must have made the Indo-Aryans pay special attention to purity of the body as well as to purity of the mind, the existing over-emphasis on outer purity appears to have begun between the Gupta period of Indian histofy which commenced in the fourth century, and the beginning of the Muhammadan period in the 11th century A. D. It was in this period that the Śakas or Scythians, the Hūṇas and the Vāhikas were all crushed and gradually became submerged in the Indian population. It was during those few centuries that the largest amount of absorption and assimilation of increasing masses of the aboriginal population into the Hindu fold also appears to have taken place. From the Allahabad Pillar we learn that Emperor Samudragupta took into his employment (aboriginal) chiefs of the forest countries.[29]

The clash of the two divergent social traditions and ideals affected Aryan society almost as much as it affected the Non-Aryan communities who entered the Hindu fold. Each had to adapt itself to the new conditions of social life. In the case of the Aryan, the adjustment, for the general body of the people at any rate, resulted in some lowering of the old standards and ideals, whereas in the case of the Hinduised aborigines and semi-aborigines or the mixed stocks, whose social life was opened to new impressions, it meant some gradual improvement in their social institutious and customs, moral and religious ideals and their general behaviour and mode of living. The process of unconscious reciprocal evaluation, that necessarily followed, gradually resulted in the general domination of Aryan culture over the non-Aryan. Some of the more powerful families amongst the new entrants into the Hindu fold got themselves recognized as Kṣattriyas and most of the rest as Śūdras.

Under the foreign Muhammadan domination which soon followed, the social authority hitherto exercised by Hindu kings almost disappeared, and the spiritual influence of the Brahmins was, to some extent, impaired. The various tribal and other elements that had entered the Hindu fold could not be completely integrated. The tribal spirit of separatism once more began to raise its head. The *Devakas* of Western India castes, the *Santakas* of Oriyā castes, the caste-marks of many Hindu sects are, like the totem badges

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29. Imp. Gaz. I. 64.

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of our aboriginal tribes, expressions of the consciousness of kind in relation to their own narrow circle of caste or sect.

I shall not endeavour to show in this paper in detail how in the conflict between the Indo-Aryan ideal of one universal human family with its four different branches, graded on the basis of comparative purity of soul, or, in other words, on the degree of the *sattvaguṇa* or spirituality irrespective of race or nationality and forming one organic whole, on the one hand, and the non-Aryan spirit of tribalism and separatism on the other, there appear to have emerged by way of compromise-formations arrived at, not artificially by a man or a body of men but by a natural process of adjustment—three forms of social grouping, one within the other. These are : first, the four-fold Varṇa division on the basis of the innate *guṇas*, tendencies of the soul, (indicated by the general nature of the function that any family or higher social unit is fitted to fulfil in the social organism), and grouped variously under the four Varṇa divisions ; secondly, the three thousand or more castes formed on the basis, some of tribe or race or race-mixture and also of actual vocation or occupation, and some on the basis of special religious doctrines or social usages and a few by exclusion or outcasting ; and, lastly, a number of sub-castes formed on the basis either of habitat or local distribution of different branches of the main castes, or of different specialized modes of following the same occupation, or by splits through feuds, and so forth. This revised scheme of social order which took due account of all the three main factors of social progress, viz, race or heredity, environment, and cultural ideal, but laid special stress on the ancient cultural ideal of purity, was found to be the most practical means of harmonising the different ideals of the heterogeneous component elements of the new Hindu society. But care was, in ancient times, taken to see that the Varṇa standards were maintained, with a view to the progressive advancement of every individual. It is therefore incorrect to say, that the Hindu law-givers merely described "in terms of an intrusive Indo-Aryan society a social system really based on the taboos of pre-existing conditions." It is still more unjust and incorrect to say that "the whole series of matrimonial taboos which constitute the corner-stone of the Caste system were initiated by the Brahmins for their own benefit." Whatever regulations the Brahmin leaders of ancient Hindu society might have prescribed either regarding occupation or marriage were prescribed with an eye to the social and economic welfare of societies in those days.

The compromise between the ideals, institutions and beliefs of the Indo-Aryans and Pre-Aryans to which I would ascribe the Caste system as it now exists, resulted in what has been called Neo-Hinduism. The older elasticity and adaptability of *Varṇa* system, already considerably impaired, now quite disappeared, particularly when Hindu rule was supplanted by foreign rule ; and the Hindu theory of *Karma* with the theory of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, independently evolved both by the Aryan and pre-Aryan, was invoked to justify this fixity of caste. The Hindu pantheon was modified by the substitution of the present Hindu trinity and their various manifestations for their older prototypes among the Vedic Nature-Deities, and by the assimilation of some pre-

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Aryan spirits and their transformation from malevolent into benevolent deities. The Non-Aryan notions of food-taboos and touch-taboos based on the idea of a super-physical virtue or '*mana*' reacted on and tainted the Aryan Hindu notion of taboo based on purity or impurity in the sense of a tendency to promote or retard the *sattvaguṇa* or spiritual element in man.

Now and then, some later Hindu sovereign, such as king Ballāla Sena in Bengal, sought to reinforce the ideal of inner purity in caste by introducing a graded sub-division within the caste on the basis of purity of character and conduct. This system of *Kulinism*, as it is called, worked well for a time in Bengal, but after the downfall of the Hindu dynasty it gradually languished and finally degenerated into a monstrous abnormality.

It is a strange irony of fate that the primitive notion of a harmful mystic energy or '*mana*' from which Hindu teachers sought to wean the aboriginal converts by inculcating and substituting in its place the idea of inner purity and external hygienic cleanliness, in course of time obsessed most descendants of those very teachers. The extravagant notions of outward purity and pollution of the orthodox Brahmins of later times are in fact akin to the primitive man's superstitious notions of the touch-taboo and food-taboo. Intimate contact with Hindus weakened the food-taboos of the aboriginal converts, but, made their Hindu teachers more rigid in their observance of various taboos. Whereas the Hinduized aborigines, or the depressed classes as they are now styled, have modified their old commensal taboo to the extent of taking cooked food from those regarded as higher than themselves in the caste hierarchy, many Brahmins now taboo cooked food at the hands of even Brahmins of sub-castes other than their own.

The old Hindu ideal of purity of the soul as the basis of caste hegemony came by degrees to be overshadowed and generally ignored in actual practice by an extravagant overemphasis on external *śaucam* or ceremonial purity. This, aided by increasing narrowness of outlook and haughty exclusiveness of a large section of latter-day orthodox Brahmins, which is repugnant to the original high ideal of Brahminhood, ultimately led to the degrading notion of untouchability in Northern India, and untouchability and unapproachability in Southern India and the barbarous practices connected with them which now form a hideous blot on Hindu society and an insurmountable obstacle to the realisation of the ancient Hindu ideal of the *Puruṣasūkta*.

There is, however, some hope still left. There still exists a silver lining to the cloudy prospect. The original Hindu ideal of purity of soul—of life dominated by *sattvaguṇa*—is not altogether lost. It is still believed to be kept up in the lives of a few-extremely few-holy men in India. Most educated Hindus are familiar with that ideal from ancient Indian literature and from *mantras* which they have to recite, either in their daily prayers or on ceremonial occasions. As for the uneducated or half-educated Hindu masses, the folk legends, myths, songs, *kathās*, and the stories of ideal heroes narrated in the great Hindu epics, which they hear and learn, and digest the socio-religious and other folk-ceremonies such as the *Vratas* which Hindu females observe, the ablutions and other purificatory rites

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which Hindus are required to observe on ceremonial occasions, the observances of outward purity which they see many of the twice-born castes daily practise, and the several striking instances of purity of soul and exemplary outward behaviour which they still witness among some Brahmins and the involuntary homage all Hindus pay to holy men—these are the channels through which the ancient Aryan Hindu ideal of purity of soul has continually flowed into their minds and effected their whole cultural constitution and out-look. The instinct of inner purity has filtered down from pious Brahmin Pandits to the lowest strata of the Hindu and Hinduized population and has effected, to a little extent, even the aboriginal communities outside the pale of Hinduism. It has settled deep down in the country's soul and dominates the sub-conscious mind of all sections of the Hindu and Hinduized population. This is what has given the affable and mild Hindu his distinctive character among the nations of the world.

Here and there we sometimes see this sub-consciocs regard for outer and inner purity coming up prominently to the surface and revealing itself in some striking manifestation in the shape of spontaneous purity-movements. Thus, even among the aboriginal and semi-aboriginal communities, we have seen, in recent times, the *Sāphā-hor* (or pure-man) movement among the Santals of the Santal Parganas, the Birsāite movement in the Muṇḍā tribe and the Ṭānā-Bhagat movement among the Orāons of Chhota Nagpur. It is this instinctive reverence for inner purity that still impels the people of India to render spontaneous homage to any striking manifestation of purity of soul. This is why the genuine *Sādhu* or holy man, however low his original caste may be, is honoured and adored by prince and peasant throughout India. This is why Mahatma Gandhi, who belongs to the third or Vaiśya class, commands a far higher reverence throughout Hindu India than an average, good, and pious Brahmin. It is as the 'Saint of Sabarmati' a man of extraordinary purity of soul that the masses of India, many of whom, outside his own province, know little of his politics and perhaps careless, pay their heart's homage to him.

This instinctive reverence for the pure in soul is the silver thread of unity that still unites the people of India in the recognition of the spiritual motive of life. This persistence of the spirit of ancient Hindu culture gives us hope that India will once more rise through spiritual consciousness to a common human consciousness ; and the Hindu's consciousness of kind will not be confined to caste, community or race or religion but will comprise the whole of mankind, and the social order of humanity will be regulated by moral and spiritual values as the *Ṛṣi*, composer of the *Puruṣasūkta*, had visualized it.

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